GET A LOAD OF CVG'S SOLID GOLD **GANGSTA ISSUE!**

RES EVIL 4 BACK ON FORM AT LAST!

...PUTER & VIDEO GAMES

CVG

METAL GEAR 3
SNAKE EATER SECRETS!

REVEALED: First ever pics of Snake's cool new camo skins!

THE WORLD'S FIRST & BEST GAMES MAG

IT'S OFFICIAL!
XBOX2
First HOT details of Microsoft's next-gen monster!

grand theft auto SanAndreas
THE MAP!
On the road with Rockstar's deadly new gang-banger

EXCLUSIVE! DRIVEN TO DESTRUCTION!

DRIV3R

SPOILER ALERT! Every mission blown apart!
But is it any cop or just plain criminal?

Red Hot & Rated!
OVER **80** REVIEWS

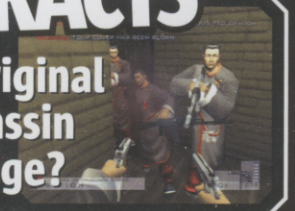
- Onimusha 3
- Ninja Gaiden
- Battlefield Vietnam
- Unreal 2
- Far Cry
- Fight Night 2004
- Pokémon Colosseum
- Metroid Zero Mission
- Rise To Honour
- Project Zero 2

& LOADS more!

MO' GANGSTA SH... YOU GOTTA SEE

KILLER 7
On the rampage with this year's most schizo, psycho shooter!

HITMAN CONTRACTS
Has the original silent assassin lost his edge?

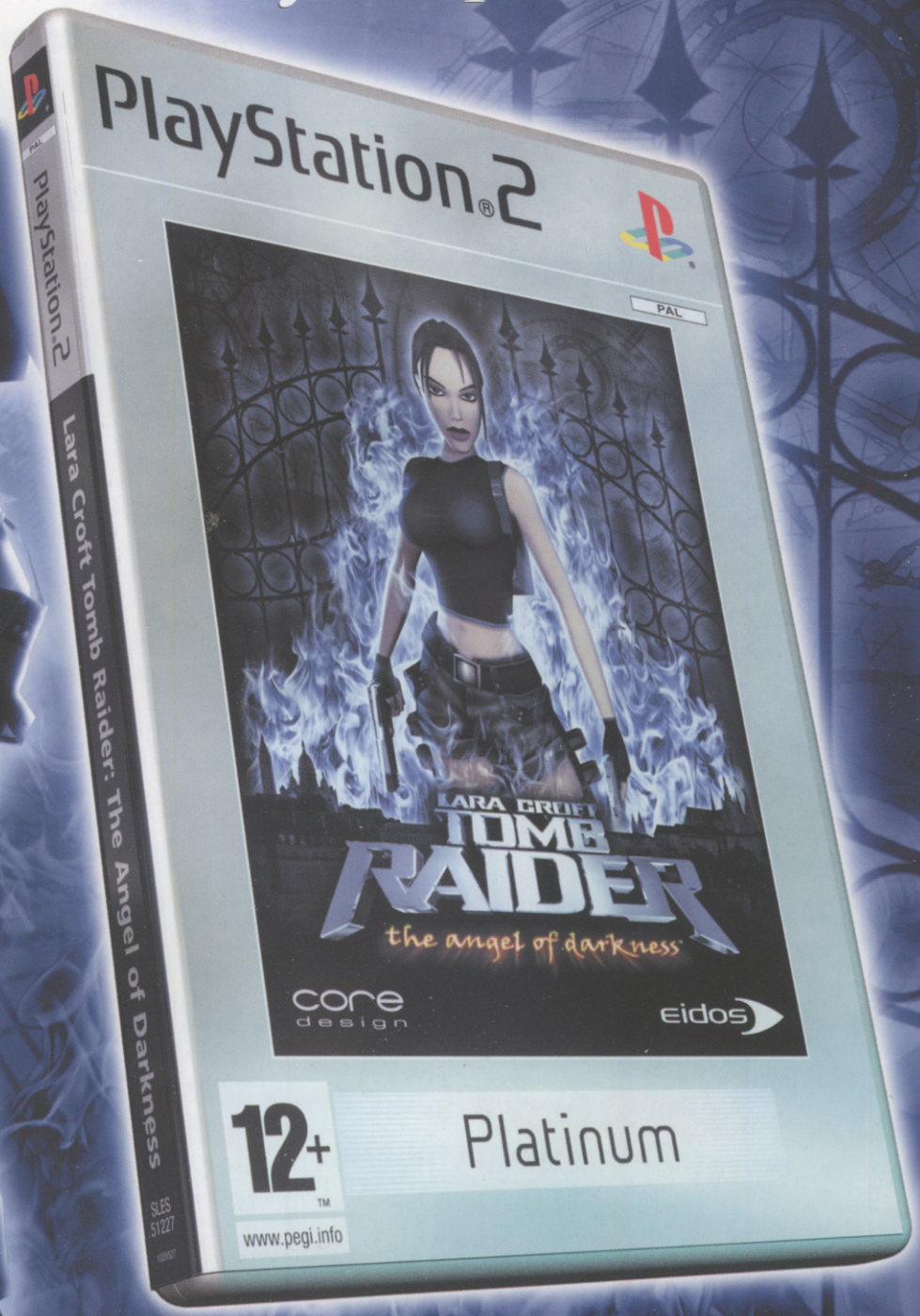


MAY 2004 * ISSUE 272 * £3.25

9 770261 369147 05

OVERSEAS PRICE £3.50

she may have gone platinum...



but she's no dumb blonde.

PlayStation.2

www.tombraider.com

eidos

Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness © Core Design Limited, 2003. Published by Eidos, 2003. Core, Lara Croft and Tomb Raider are registered Trademarks of Core Design Limited. Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness is a trademark of Core Design Limited. Eidos, and the Eidos logo are trademarks of the Eidos group of companies. All Rights Reserved. "PS" and "PlayStation" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved.

MAY 2004

THE MONTH THAT...

Microsoft flew CVG stateside to bring YOU the scoop on the wickedly hot technology that'll make Xbox 2 games rock harder!

XBOX 2

POWERED BY XNA

REVEALED: THE BEAST BENEATH XBOX 2'S BONNET

XNA will revolutionise the way games look, feel and play. Ignite your excitement NOW!

GO TO PAGE: 06

THIS MONTH'S CVG IN NUMBERS

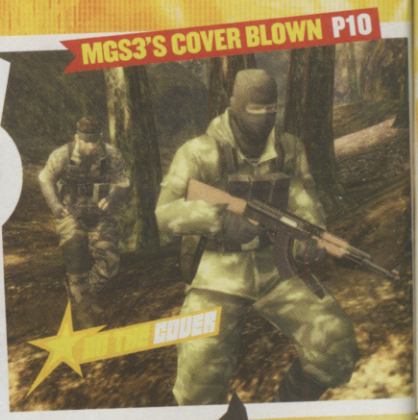
NUMBER OF GAMES	NUMBER OF SCREENS	GAMES RATED	GANSTA GAMES
355	825	82	11

THE GANGSTA ISSUE. TURN OVER AND GET STUCK IN!

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
CVG
MAY 2004 ISSUE

Contents

THE WORLD'S FIRST AND BEST VIDEO GAMES MAGAZINE



30 **Shellshock: Nam '67**
Suck up a good lungful of napalm and prepare yourself for our first hands-on with Guerrilla's gory Vietnam shocker!

46 **Resident Evil Outbreak**
Don't pick up the phone – there's zombies on the line! We pick Outbreak's scabs and squeeze out all the gungy innards

48 **UEFA EURO 2004**
EN-GER-LAND! FIFA's inevitable cash-in on Euro 2004 hits the back of the net. Is it a screamer or just the same player wearing a fancy new kit?

AIN'T NUTHIN' BUT A G-THANG

Welcome to CVG's Gangsta issue. But I'm not gonna waste time telling you why it's the Gangsta issue, just know this: we've got four red-hot exclusives. Not one or two like some mags, but FOUR!

CVG's experts have flown the Atlantic to see Xbox 2 technology unvieled in the US, played Driv3r more than any other mag to give you the DEFINITIVE lowdown, cruised the streets of GTA San Andreas AND gone all camo with Solid Snake! Like I said, you deserve it...

Alex Simmons
Alex Simmons *Editor*

ON THE COVER

08 KILLER 7
Mental new facts and brain-bending pics of Capcom's ultra stylish action thriller

10 METAL GEAR SOLID 3
We had some news about Snake's new camo, but we can't see where it's gone...

26 DRIV3R'S COVER BLOWN!
XBOX WORLD EXCLUSIVE: We go deeper than ANYONE with the ultimate car chase game!

40 HITMAN: CONTRACTS
Baldy signs on the dotted line for more killin' work, but should we give him his P45?

63 GTA: SAN ANDREAS
Rockstar's gangsta godfather heads west. All the info on San Andreas AND THE MAP!

the team

WELCOME TO CVG'S GANGSTA ISSUE. MEET THE MOB...

Alex Simmons **Editor**
CVG's godfather made us an offer we couldn't refuse: knuckle down or you'll be sleeping with da fishes.

Pete Walker **Managing Editor**
If you see whisperin' Pete Walker sneak up on your review it's too late – he's our silent word assassin.

Lee Skittrell **Reviews Editor**
Lee's our enforcer – he's been poppin' caps in the wiseguy games that dared stray into our 'hood.

Mike Cooper **News Editor**
Mike's been exploring his multiple personalities with Killer 7. "No I haven't." "Yes I have." "Shut up!"

Graeme Boyd **Staff Writer**
CVG's expert wheelman brutally thrashed Driv3r till the wheels fell off. Schmuck had to walk home.

Paul Davies **Contributing Ed**
Paul's been practising his assassin skills on Hitman: Contracts – if you see him with his cheese-wire, RUN!

Jaime Smith **Art Editor**
Jaime's gone for the Dr. Evil style of keepin' it in the family – he got his own mini-me! Congratulations J!

Mike Newson **Design Troll**
Nuisance is the hired muscle round here. Mess and we'll send him round with his rock 'ard design bat.

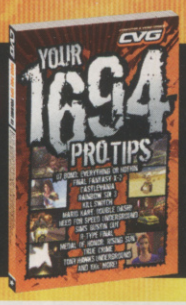
IN THE BOOKS

CVG MASTER GUIDES #2

COMPLETE WALKTHROUGHS FOR HOT GAMES

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW
- Sam's slick stealth sequel is tough, but this'll get you through

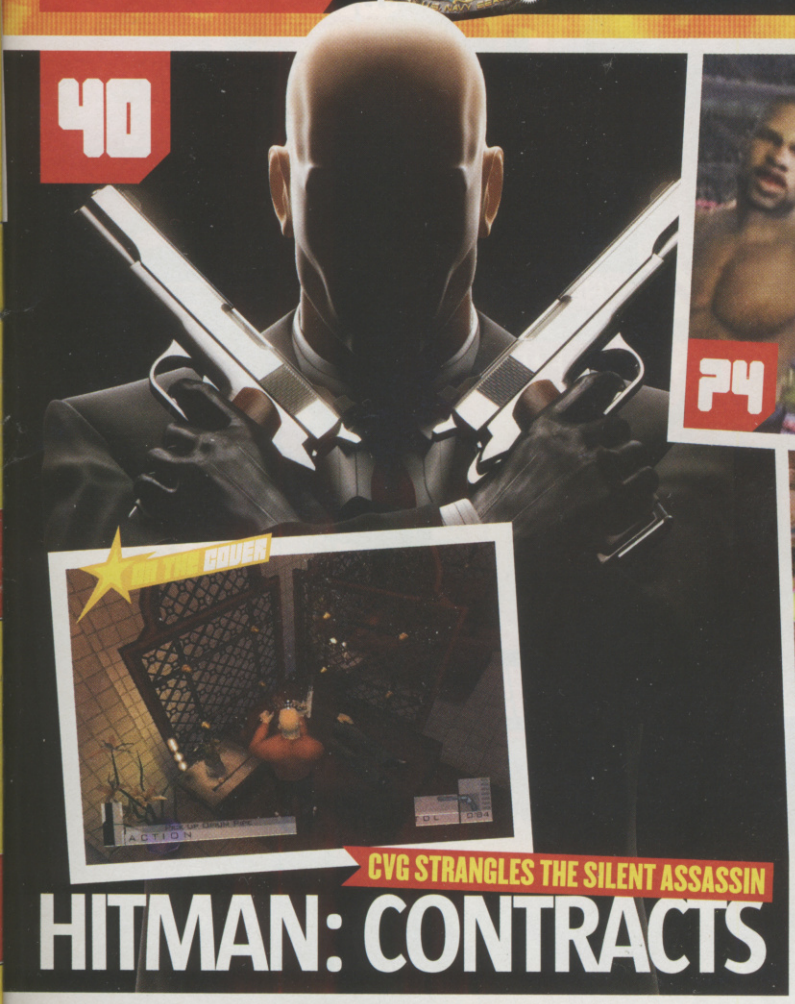
SOCOM II
- Every objective revealed, every mission blown wide open!



YOUR 1694 PRO TIPS

BUSTIN' TIPS FOR MOUNTAINS OF GAMES!

- FFX-2
- Kill.switch
- R-Type Final
- Spawn Armageddon
- Spyhunter 2
- I-Ninja
- Tiger Woods '04
- Castlevania
- Downhill Domination
- Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II
- Kya
- 007 Everything Or Nothing
- NFS Underground
- & loads more!

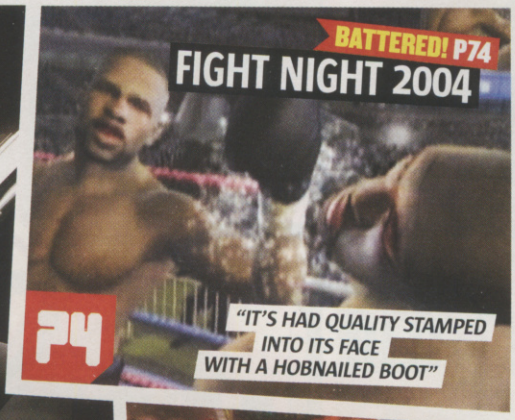


40

COVER

CVG STRANGLES THE SILENT ASSASSIN

HITMAN: CONTRACTS



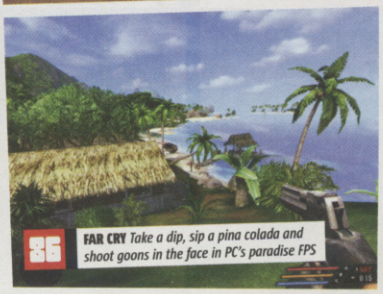
BATTERED! P74

FIGHT NIGHT 2004

P4

"IT'S HAD QUALITY STAMPED INTO ITS FACE WITH A HOBNAILED BOOT"

80 **POKEMON COLOSSEUM** *The little buggers invade Cube with an all-new RPG adventure!*



86 **FAR CRY** *Take a dip, sip a pina colada and shoot goons in the face in PC's paradise FPS*

REVIEWS EVERY NEW GAME USED AND ABUSED

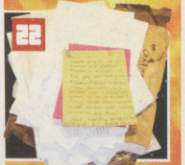
74 FIGHT NIGHT 2004 PS2 XBOX
78 RISE TO HONOUR PS2
79 MIDNIGHT NOWHERE PC
79 GLASS ROSE PS2
80 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM GC
82 FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL PS2 XBOX
83 MTX: MOTOTRAX PS2 XBOX
84 INTERNATIONAL GOLF PRO PS2
84 RISK: GLOBAL DOMINATION PS2
85 BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM PC
86 FAR CRY PC
88 UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING XBOX
89 DEAD MAN'S HAND XBOX PC
89 MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE OPERATION SURMA GC
90 PROJECT ZERO II: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY PS2
94 METROID: ZERO MISSION GBA
95 SCOOBY-DOO! MYSTERY MAYHEM PS2 XBOX GC
95 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES PS2 XBOX GC PC
97 TENCHU: RETURN FROM DARKNESS XBOX
98 TRANSFORMERS PS2
99 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY PS2 XBOX
99 BAD BOYS II PS2 XBOX
99 DRAGON BALL Z: TAIKETSU GBA
99 SPACE INVADERS ANNIVERSARY GBA
99 POOL PARADISE PS2
99 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL 2004 PS2 XBOX PC
99 YU-GI-OH! WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT 2004 GBA
100 IMPORT! NINJA GAIDEN XBOX
101 IMPORT! ONIMUSHA 3 PS2
102 IMPORT! FIREFIGHTER FD18 PS2
102 IMPORT! DRAKENGARD PS2
102 IMPORT! LIFELINE PS2

PLANET CVG RED HOT NEWS INJECTIONS

06 **XBOX 2**
Microsoft unveils the next-gen of gaming!
07 **PRO EVO SHOCKER!**
Konami's footie god transfers onto Xbox
08 **KILLER 7**
Deadly new details and blood everywhere
10 **METAL GEAR SOLID 3**
Snake's new camo – but will it wash?
13 **DOOM 3**
Awesome new info on the Xbox version
14 **RESIDENT EVIL 4**
Capcom rewrites the horror handbook
17 **SECOND SIGHT**
New game from the TimeSplitters team

REGULARS STICKING TO US LIKE GOLDEN CLAGNUTS

20 **CHARTS AND RELEASE DATES**
Get £5 off all the hottest games at Virgin!
22 **MAILBAG**
Meerkats, violence, and girl gamers. Nice!
24 **CHALLENGE CVG: XBOX LIVE**
CVG serves up some online Top Spin chaos
67 **CRYSTAL CHRONICLES COMPO**
Another totally unique CVG prize. Win it!
110 **SPLINTER CELL 2 COMPO**
Sneak your way to some prizes, um, today
114 **COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY**
Check out gangsta games 1989 style



CVG BIG TIPS SOD TIPS, LOOK AT THE NURSE!

106 **NURSE CVG'S BIG TIPS**
Puke on your pad? Nurse'll make it better
106 **TAK AND THE POWER OF JUJU**
Rumble in the jungle with these codes
106 **SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS**
CVG's tips make it all gravy in the navy
106 **007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING**
Be better than Bond. We bust the secrets
107 **LMA MANAGER 2004**
Instant footie management skills
107 **TOP TWENTY TIPS**
Cheat the best-selling charts!
108 **SHOW US YOUR TIPS!**
Just give them a wash first
108 **NFL STREET**
Rule the streets, cuz
109 **FIRST AID**
Relief from Nurse CVG
109 **NFS: UNDERGROUND**
Max your motor: CVG's mental modding guide
109 **SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW**
The ultimate online espionage trick!

PREVIEWS FRESH GAMES BLAZIN' YOUR WAY

30 SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67 PS2 XBOX PC
33 KARAOKE STAGE PS2
34 STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT PS2 XBOX PC
34 MERCENARIES PS2
35 STAR WARS REPUBLIC COMMANDO XBOX PC
36 THIEF 3: DEADLY SHADOWS XBOX PC
38 RED DEAD REVOLVER PS2 XBOX
39 SUDEKI XBOX
40 HITMAN 3: CONTRACTS PS2 XBOX PC
42 SHADOW OPS: RED MERCURY XBOX PC
43 GALLEON XBOX
44 ONIMUSHA BLADE WARRIORS PS2
45 DISGAEA – THE HOUR OF DARKNESS PS2
46 RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK PS2
48 UEFA EURO 2004 PS2 XBOX GC PC
49 ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL PS2 XBOX
50 S.T.A.L.K.E.R. SHADOW OF CHERNOBYL PC
51 HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN PS2 XBOX GC GBA PC
52 BREAKDOWN XBOX
53 SONIC ADVANCE 3 GBA
54 MALICE PS2 XBOX
56 MASHED PS2 XBOX PC
56 GHOST MASTER PS2 XBOX

SNIFF OUR HOT NEWS NUGGETS

12 pages of ultra-fibrous news freshly crimped from the pulsating centre of the gaming world. We're first with all the stories that matter. Forget the rest, we got the good shit right here!

planet cvg

HOT NEWS & GAMING GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

OH MY GOD, SHE'S ALIVE!

Character models in Xbox 2 games will look, move and behave like never before. We got to see this horny bird puppeted by the power of XNA, and witnessed almost every bit of her body in action.

She could pout and bite her lip on command, rap her fingers slowly on the table and wiggle her toes, all in real-time. This is going to make all the characters you come in contact with massively more believable and impressive. So if you shoot a Grunt in Halo 3 you'll probably be able to see their facial expression change and grimace with pain as they twitch and splash in a pool of their own blood.

XBOX: FROM ZERO TO HERO

I remember the day I got my Xbox, unwrapped it and forklifted it into my living room. It was shocking. How could I have let such a creature into my home, the Jabba The Hutt of consoles! But then I slipped some unknown game into its hungry gob and the beast suddenly transformed into a beauty.

Obviously that game was Halo, and by the same afternoon I'd shifted to the dark side. Microsoft had muscled its way into the games industry, they were here to stay, and I was happy to hop aboard for the ride. It's been bumpy at times, but over the past year Xbox has begun shine (especially with Live) – and the future is even brighter. This month in Planet CVG we've got the world's first official details on Xbox 2, plus a mountain of other Xbox-related scoops like Pro Evo's shift onto Microsoft's mean machine. What are you waiting for, tuck in!

Mike Cooper

Mike Cooper *News Editor*

this month...

08 KILLER 7
Inside the head of Capcom's schizo assassin

09 NEXT-GEN NEWS
News dedicated to every upcoming console

10 METAL GEAR 3
See Solid Snake's new camo system in action!

12 GBA MOVIE PLAYER
Transfer DVDs onto your GBA and watch movies!

"HIT A WALL AT 200MPH AND THE CAR SQUISHES TO HALF ITS LENGTH"

EXCLUSIVE

THE FACE OF XBOX 2

THE NEXT-GEN RACE HAS STARTED AND MICROSOFT STEAMS INTO THE LEAD

The future of gaming is staring you right in the face. These are the world's first images of what Xbox 2 will be capable of, and it's f@cking awesome!

This month CVG flew out to San Jose and witnessed the unveiling of XNA, the phenomenally powerful software that'll be used to create games for Microsoft's next-gen console and future Windows PC titles.

Microsoft showed us three real-time demos of the software in action. They were all run on a mothership of a PC, but interestingly were all demoed using Xbox's current Controller S. See, Microsoft's plan for the future is that Xbox 2 and PCs will use the same controller!

So the lights go down and it all kicks off. First up is a demo entitled Rex, which shows a huge white gorilla-like creature morphing into different beasts in real-time. The detail, animation and textures are unlike anything you've ever seen. Then Film Noir comes on, a short flick with this sexy woman who seductively plays with her mouth, demonstrating how phenomenal characters will look and move in games on Xbox 2.

But the grand finale, called Crash, blew the roof off. A Saleen S7 slams into a massive metal block from loads of angles, triggering the most realistic crash physics imaginable! The car crumples up and rips to pieces like it does in a real accident, with thousands of parts breaking and bending. Remember this is all stuff that happens while you play, no cut-scene bullshit. We even got hands-on and smashed the car to bits!

Microsoft hasn't confirmed a release date for Xbox 2, but all bets are on a 2005 launch. More news will be revealed at the E3 show in May, and Planet CVG will be there in force to bring you the ultimate in-depth report.

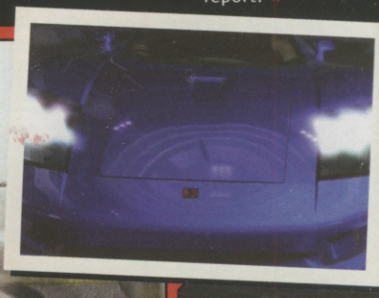
POWERED BY Microsoft XNA

CRASH TEST DUMMY

With XNA technology anything's possible. In Project Gotham 2 on Xbox when you hit something head-on your bonnet folds up, the headlights smash and your licence plate falls off. Right, now imagine you're playing Gotham 3 on Xbox 2 online. Someone sideswipes you into a lamppost and your car literally wraps itself around it, crumpling at the side and breaking into hundreds of pieces of scrap.

It's brutally realistic. Your car isn't just a hollow shell. Everything inside is deformable too – the seats, the steering wheel, EVERYTHING! Hit a wall at 200mph and the car squishes to half it's length, compacting into a thick block of mangled metal. When we played it every crash was different, depending on how fast and at what angle you hit the solid block. Collide with a 45° corner and you'll leave a big v-shaped mess in your front half. But hitting the edge at a slightly different position caused all sorts of brilliantly unpredictable damage.

WE'VE PLAYED IT!



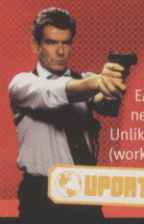
The chassis actually crimps up and bends like real metal! If you slam into something hard enough you can shatter it into thousands of tiny bits

NEWS NUGGETS

UNMISSABLE BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM ALL OVER THE PLANET

SONY'S PET GUERRILLA

Killzone creator Guerrilla Games has inked a deal with Sony to develop games just for PS2. The move will also see "the Killzone franchise expand", which sounds like a sequel is already planned! The first instalment is due this October.



EA'S GOLDEN BOY

UPDATE!

EA has now confirmed it is adapting an all-new GoldenEye game for Xbox, PS2 and Cube. Unlike Everything Or Nothing, GoldenEye 2 (working title) returns to the first-person action first associated with 007 on N64.

GAMES SCHOOL

Film schools have been around for decades, and now we're even closer to seeing games schools popping up all over the world. EA just donated millions to the University Of Southern California to fund a new degree course called the Electronic Arts Interactive Entertainment Program. Sign us up!

A STROKE OF GENIUS

Xbox 2 is going to be capable of pumping out some seriously mind-blowing graphical effects. In the Rex tech demo the most striking sight, apart from the ultra fluid animation, was the textures.

Especially the fur, it looks unbelievably soft, bouncy and strokeable. Like Sully's coat in Monster's Inc. There's a real chance that we'll be playing games in a year or two that look just as impressive as Pixar's animated classic movie.

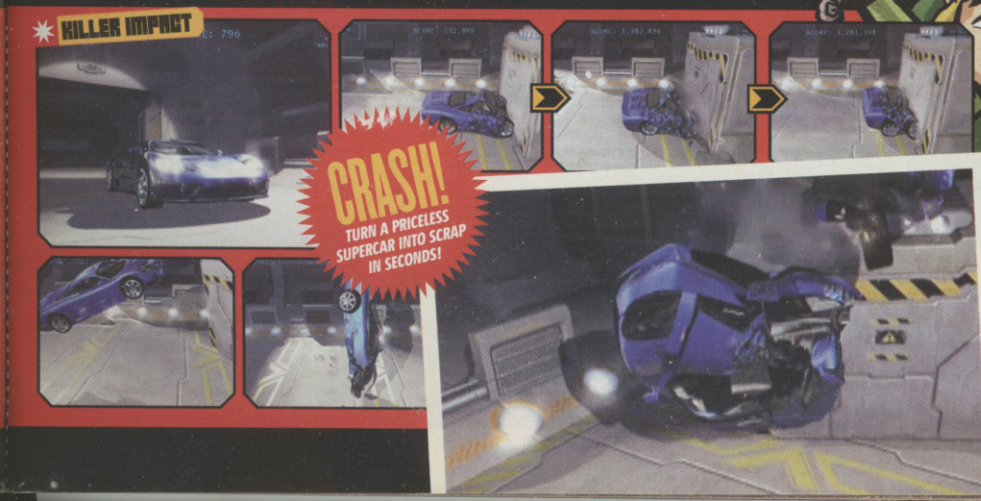
© DISNEY/PIXAR

LOSING YOUR MEMORY

Word is the hard drive, the reason for Xbox's obese size and weight, is getting dumped.The President of a company called M-Systems that'll be making memory units for Xbox 2 has said Microsoft has taken the hard drive out of the machine.

M-Systems makes flash memory units with up to 1Gb of memory – that's like 125 Xbox memory cards, but the hard drive has a huge eight gigs of space. There are other storage options, though, like on a server system, or maybe you could link your box to a PC to store data. Sounds like another move towards controlling all your entertainment set-up. But even if Xbox 2 becomes self-aware and eats all our crisps we'll forgive it as long as it plays Halo 3.

KILLER IMPACT



RED, FIGHT AND BLUE

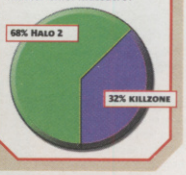
NEW MULTIPLAYER MAP!

We were still coming down from last issue's Halo 2 adrenaline rush when this new multiplayer screenshot came in and sent us bouncing off the walls again.

The last multiplayer shot showed two teams of four battling it out over a Warthog – this one looks more like a squad-based assault on a frosty ice base. Check out the size of that mountain in the background – imagine scrapping on steep, craggy slopes and ravines! It's another tickly tease from Bungie in the run up to May's E3 – we're desperately hoping we will. C'mon Bungie!

HALO 2 VS KILLZONE

Last month we ran a vote to find out whether you were more excited about Halo 2 or Killzone. The result? It's a Master Chief massacre!



XBOX SCORES PRO EVO

THEY SAID IT'D NEVER HAPPEN... IT HAS NOW!

'AVE IT!

Pro Evo broke free from its PS2 shackles in November '03 when PES3 made a surprise sidestep onto PC. But the world's leading footie franchise remained faithful to PS2 when it came to console – until now. That bond just got shattered with Konami's announcing Pro Evo is come to Xbox at the end of the year!

The news has set Xbox forums ablaze with speculation and rumours, some reckoning it's an all-new game that will differ from the PS2 version and that it'll feature online multiplayer for Xbox Live.

That's the dream, online matches, but in reality Konami is yet to reveal any specific details on the game. Plus it's highly unlikely that Xbox's debut PES appearance will be a spin-off on the brand. We're almost certain that it'll be Pro Evo 4 and near identical to the next PS2 version.

We'll be bringing you all the highlights of any developments on PES for Xbox next issue.

NINTENDO NIRVANA

METROID 2, NEW ZELDA AND MORE UNCOVERED NEXT MONTH!

This year's E3 games show kicks off on May 12th, but Nintendo is holding a pre-E3 conference on May 11th, when it's expected to lift the lid on all its upcoming products.

Word on the inside is that both Metroid 2 and the next Zelda game will be revealed on the day. Plus Nintendo has already confirmed that it will be unveiling Nintendo DS on the 11th. However rumours are escalating that Mario 128 won't be on show, but we're still keeping everything crossed for a miracle.

STOP PRESS

Nintendo DS will also be fully playable at E3, according to Japanese Games mag Nintendo Dream. For the rest of this month's info on DS, flick over to page 9 and check out Planet CVG's new Next Gen News column.

PANIC ATTACK!

Last month we announced Panic Maker on PS2 from the creators of Viewtiful Joe. This month we've got the first pics of it in action. You play a blue alien Kozumi. He's come to Earth to help mankind but his arrival panics the world instead!

THIS MONTH'S BEST RUMOUR

CVG's snouts sniffed out a particularly hot bit of gossip that the arcade version of Tekken 5 will almost certainly appear at the E3 games expo in May! Bring it on!

Hot or Not?

CAPCOM

CAPCOM

Killer 7 and Resident Evil 4 are two of the hottest games on the planet. Capcom isn't afraid to surf the cutting-edge at the moment. It's got stacks of wicked ideas and it's not afraid to use 'em. Just look at the new game from the creator of Viewtiful Joe, Panic Maker (see above).

GTA SAN ANDREAS

If you own a PS2 it's impossible not to catch the GTA bug at the moment. No-one will shut up about it, or at least we won't because San Andreas is bound to be the best in the series. In seven months it'll be on UK shelves. Roll on 22 October 2004!

GBA MOVIE PLAYER

Okay, so it's a bit clunky, and it ain't exactly a PSP. But this cheeky little multi-media peripheral is a must-have for GBA-owning tech freaks. You can import one from www.lik-sang.com for under 30 quid. It does everything except massage your feet.

CONTROLLERS WITH WIRES

Oh sweet Wavebird! No mess or threat of having the pad wrenched from your palms as some plum bowls past and trips over the lead. PS2's wire is too short and the Xbox wire unhooks itself with the slightest of tugs. Death to all cables, scissors out!

SIX YEAR-OLDS ON XBOX LIVE

You're playing Gotham 2 online with a decent bunch of people then LittleTithead69 appears in the waiting room and starts squeaking, "Don't like these cars... NO, not that track, blah, blah, waaa!" Just f@ck off to bed, and don't wake up!

GARCIAN SMITH

Garcian is a clairvoyant with awesome abilities.

He can easily spot traps and can actually see through an enemy's flesh to pick out their physical weak spots! Despite being a beefy bugger, he's not much of a fighter.

FAVE WEAPON
Small Silenced 9mm

DAN SMITH

FAVE WEAPON
Modified Colt Python

He da man! Probably the coolest of the bunch, he can change the direction of bullets with his mind.

He'd kill Harman given the chance and only trusts Garcian. He also has a mysterious hidden power that Harman doesn't even know about.

KEVIN SMITH

Kevin looks like an ice cool vampire.

Light can kill him, hence the shades and milky complexion. He's a shadow-dweller whose eyes glow in the dark, master of stealth and the only character who never uses a gun.

FAVE WEAPON
Throwing Knives

EXCLUSIVE

Killer 7

ON PS2 & GC

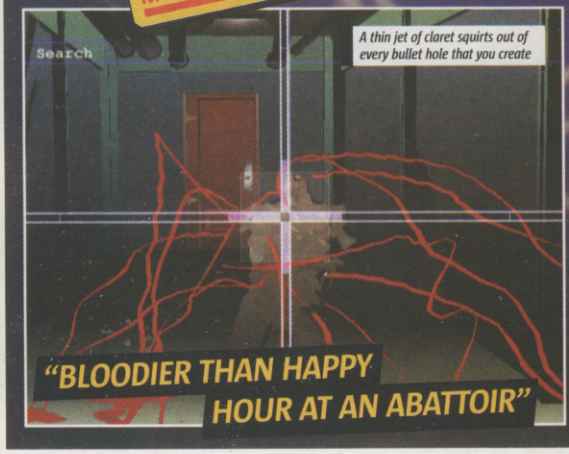
MR PERSO

COYOTE SMITH

He's got the coolest name and a truely wicked skill.

Coyote is able to pass through physical objects – walls, doors, tables, whatever. He's notoriously unfriendly and always picking fights with the others, especially Dan.

FAVE WEAPON
Modified Enfield Pistol



A thin jet of claret squirts out of every bullet hole that you create

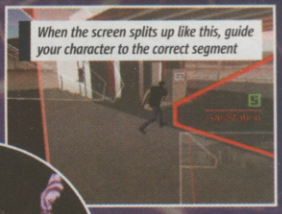
"BLOODIER THAN HAPPY HOUR AT AN ABATTOIR"

This month Planet CVG straps electrodes to Capcom producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi and turns up the voltage to get the electric inside scoop on Killer 7 for Cube and PS2.

"It's a collection of stories, rather like an omnibus," Kobayashi tells us. "You will need to make use of all seven characters to finish the game."

Harman Smith is the main hero, a crippled assassin who lives his life through his seven deadly personalities. Harman (aka God Killer) must assassinate a supernatural villain called Kun Lan.

Whenever Kun Lan touches someone they morph into a nutter with a mental grin, otherwise dubbed a Heaven Smile. Harman's seven personalities must fight these twisted fecks – and the combat is bloodier than happy hour



When the screen splits up like this, guide your character to the correct segment

Garcian scans the innards of his foes to locate their weaknesses

RATCHET & CLANK 3 ONLINE

NEW NET-BASED MULTIPLAYER ACTION

Sony has revealed a surprising twist in the Ratchet & Clank saga, introducing online play.

Ratchet & Clank 3: Up Your Arsenal boasts online multiplayer team-based battles and deathmatches for up to eight players or bots, plus vehicles where one person can drive while others pile on and use the on-board gun turrets, Halo style. We've heard rumours of online co-op play, plus all the multiplayer stuff works offline.

The new weapons sound hilarious too. One gun even fires mini black holes that suck up enemies! Up Your Arsenal is out exclusively on PS2 this Autumn.

UPDATE!

Word is that the AI is surprisingly smart. In a test Ratchet was placed at one end of a level with an enemy at the other, and the enemy hunted Ratchet down cross-country style

A FAR CRY FROM PC

Ubisoft's stunning shooter Far Cry is making the move from PC to console. Developer Crytek has confirmed that the Xbox version is currently in development, and a PS2 conversion is also likely.

ROUND THREE, FIGHT

Capcom has revealed Street Fighter III 3rd Strike is coming to PS2 later this year in Japan, and there are even rumblings of online bouts. News on a UK version is still under wraps, but considering the Anniversary Edition made it over here SFIII is sure to follow.

NEXT GEN NEWS

ALL THE LATEST FACTS AND GOSSIP ON THE MACHINES OF THE FUTURE

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE (PSP)

■ Bit of a bummer this month. Sony has revealed that PSP will not after all launch simultaneously in Japan, US and Europe at the end of 2004. American and European gamers will have to wait till Spring 2005 for the pukka portable. Sony says that the reason for the delay is to give games makers enough time to make the launch titles as amazing as possible.

■ Sony's Japanese head of marketing, Fumiya Takeno, has confirmed connectivity between PSP and PS2 (or PSX). But it's still not clear how this link-up feature will work – whether it'll follow the GameCube/GBA route or try something all new.

NINTENDO DS (PROJECT NITRO)

■ This month an online Nintendo resource made reference to Project Nitro, which is now believed to be the new codename for Nintendo DS.

■ According to business website CNN Money, DS will use instant messaging software, making it Nintendo's first multimedia device. There was also mention of touch-screen technology and a plastic stylus, which you could use to write and draw on the screens.

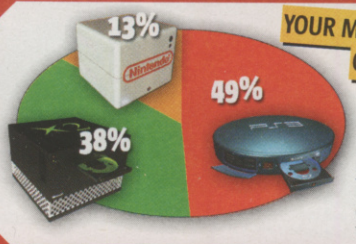
■ It's rumoured that a two-level demo of Mario 64 has been shown running on DS behind closed doors.

■ An allegedly official Japanese document was leaked this month revealing that DS will use the same button set-up as GBA. It's also said to be a powerful 3D machine, capable of coping with up to 120,000 polygons on each screen.

■ Nintendo's President, Saturo Iwata, stated in a recent interview that DS would feature wireless multiplayer gaming.

XBOX 2 (CODENAME: XENON)

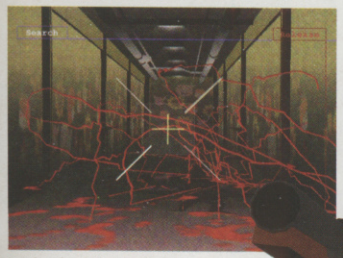
■ An inside source with close links to Microsoft claims that the controller for Xbox 2 will get rid of the black and white buttons 'cos they are underused.



YOUR MOST WANTED NEXT-GEN CONSOLES

Following last month's Rise Of The Machines cover story, masses of you texted in for the machine you're most excited about. Here is the result... Surprised?

KAEDE SMITH



Lends a feminine touch to the carnage.

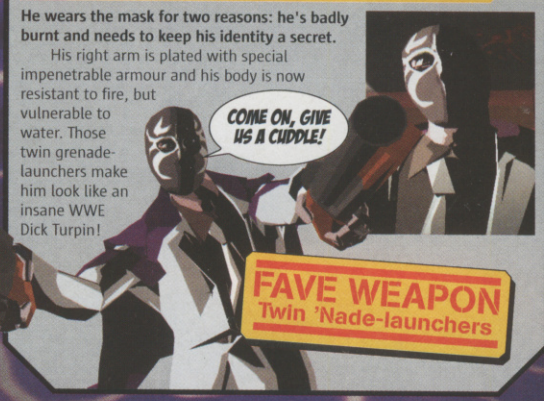
She's doesn't know she's actually one of Harman's multiple personalities. Like most gorgeous girls she's a bit of a tease, sharing her affections between both Coyote and Dan, the hussy!

FAVE WEAPON
AMT Hardballer pistol

MASK DE SMITH

He wears the mask for two reasons: he's badly burnt and needs to keep his identity a secret.

His right arm is plated with special impenetrable armour and his body is now resistant to fire, but vulnerable to water. Those twin grenade-launchers make him look like an insane WWE Dick Turpin!



FAVE WEAPON
Twin 'Nade-launchers

HARMAN SMITH

He's a 60 year-old Jewish guy who can barely walk, but he's got one hell of an active imagination.

He's a full-on schizophrenic and assassin. Frightening combo! You get to play as each of the characters that Harman has manifested in his twisted mind, and they all happen to be merciless killers too.

FAVE WEAPON
Hefty Anti-tank Rifle

CON SMITH

He's a 14 year-old assassin who uses his exceptional hearing to locate enemies by listening for their pulse.

Con is also the quickest of the gang and can disorientate foes with his speedy moves.

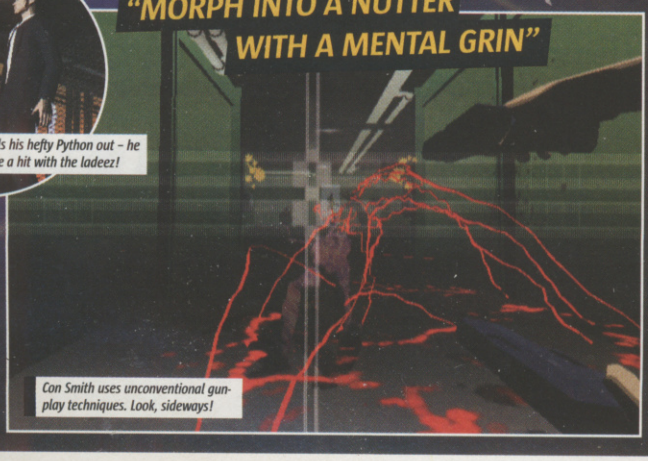
FAVE WEAPON
Two Automatic Handguns

NALITIES

DELVING INTO THE SCHIZO MIND OF KILLER 7

THE GANGSTA

Dan pulls his hefty Python out – he got to be a hit with the ladeez!



Con Smith uses unconventional gun-play techniques. Look, sideways!

at an abattoir. It's sick but stylish, and features the type of comically gory effects you'd expect to see in a Tarantino movie.

The action mostly takes place from third-person viewpoint, but Kobayashi revealed "when you engage an enemy, the action switches from third to first-person with a stylised cross hair."

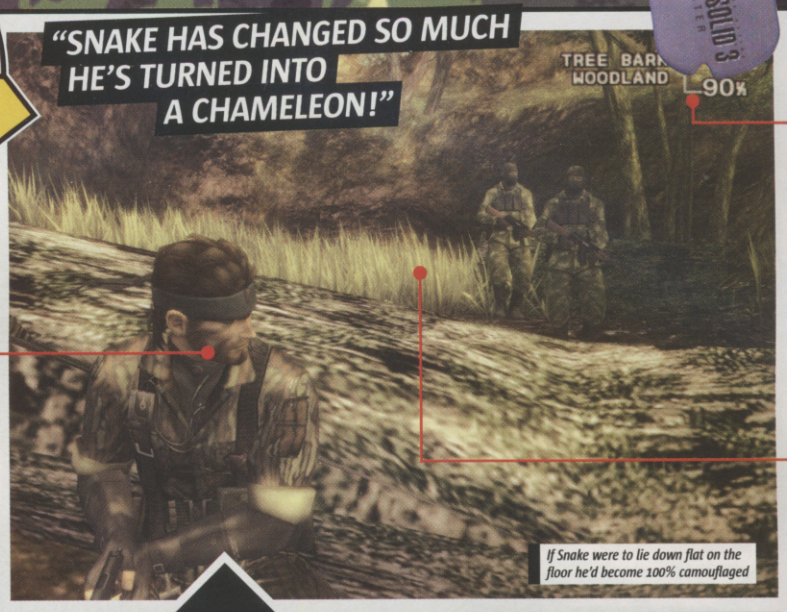
Capcom seems as excited about its crazy game as we are. Kobashi wrapped things up by saying " If, as we hope, Killer 7 is a big hit then I am sure a sequel will be given consideration." Till then we'll just keep counting the minutes until it comes out in the UK at the end of the year.

HOT NEWS & GAMING GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

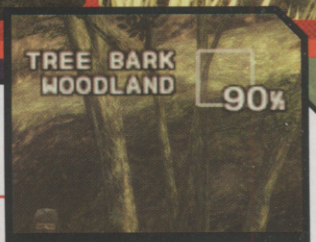
NEWS SPECIAL

"SNAKE HAS CHANGED SO MUCH HE'S TURNED INTO A CHAMELEON!"

Break up the lines of your face with a variety of different facial patterns



If Snake were to lie down flat on the floor he'd become 100% camouflaged



CAMOUFLAGE INDEX

The old radar has gone. Now all you have to help you stay undetected is this new visibility meter, which shows you how well camouflaged you are.

THE TERRAIN GAME

We can't believe how natural and realistic the environments are in MGS 3. No two pieces of vegetation look the same, and there are no patterns in the landscape. Every tree is a different shape and each has varying amounts of bright moss covering it. That's why you have to constantly survey your surroundings and make well-considered decisions on what camo to use every sneaky step of the way.

OOH, SUITS YOU SIR!

Snake's kitbag must weigh tons – he now has seven camo outfits!

SNOW — Great for icy areas and light-coloured grass

TIGER — Perfect for stalking through tall grass. Swish!

TREE — Decent for trees (like, D'uh!) and rocky locations

LEAF — Blend in brilliantly with lush green vegetation

OLIVE — Good all-round jungle attire, but bad in caves

BLACK — Suited to rocky places and decent for water too

FIRE — Ideal for dead leaves and muddy terrain

SNAKE IN THE GRASS

METAL GEAR SOLID 3'S NEW CAMO SYSTEM UNMASKED!

ONLY ON PS2

The face of stealth is changing, and it's toking smoothly on a cigarette. Solid Snake is back on sneaking duty in Metal Gear 3 but he's not arsing about in the shadows like Sam Fisher.

Hideo Kojima pioneered the whole hide 'n' sneak thing, and this time he's on a mission to prove that Metal Gear has moved with the times. In fact Snake has changed so much he's turned into a chameleon!

This month Konami sat us in a darkened room and showed us a six-minute movie that Hideo Kojima put together to demonstrate how the new camouflage system works in MGS 3: Snake Eater.

CAM ON, CAM ON!

As the game is mostly set in natural environments there aren't always objects to duck down behind when patrolling guards pass near to Snake. You're totally exposed to the elements. Sometimes there's only a patch of tall grass, some dead leaves and a tree in sight. If Snake were in his famous blue jumpsuit he'd stick out like Jordan's fake jubblies on an x-ray!

That's why he's now equipped with multiple camouflage outfits, each ideal for different surroundings. But it's not only all about what he wears – he can also use various face paint patterns to boost his camouflaged appearance. You can't just dress up in a camo outfit, slap some dirt on your face and not expect to be seen. The camouflage system is much more refined than that.

When you get your camo spot-on it's ultra difficult to see Snake. So remember where you put him!

Dangling from trees leaves you exposed, but if you use Leaf pattern camo you're less likely to be rumbled

LEAF IT OUT

Metal Gear 3 introduces a new mechanism called the Camouflage Index. This appears as a gauge in the top right of the screen that measures how well hidden you are, shown as a percentage. You pick the best camo outfit and face paint for the terrain. The less visible you are, the higher the Camouflage Index percentage.

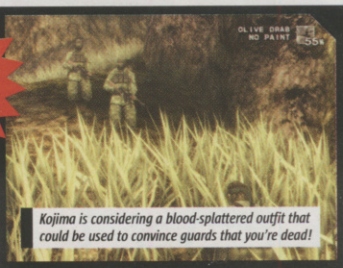
Plus your visibility depends on your body position and how you move. If you're standing on grass in your Leaf Pattern clobber you're not very well disguised – about 40% camouflaged. But if you lie down on the floor you'll be 90% camouflaged. Then, if you apply some Woodland pattern face paint, your camo percentage creeps up to 95-100%.

SNAKE PLAYS STATUES

The best way to blend into your environment is to press your body flat against the terrain you're trying to mimic, whether hiding behind a tree wearing the Tree Bark outfit or lying in dead red leaves in Fire Pattern gear. You must be very careful though, as moving drops your Camo Index percentage. If you run you'll be totally visible. Moving slowly reduces your level by a few per cent, but you really need to crawl or crouch to be really stealthy.

One of the coolest benefits of being well-camouflaged is that you can get up close to guards without them noticing. But beware. If you've chosen to hide directly in their patrol path, even when you're well hidden they may trip over you and give your mullet a lead haircut.

Konami has guaranteed that CVG will get hands-on with Snake Eater at the E3 games show this May. So don't miss our full report on how the new camo system really feels to use in the July issue!

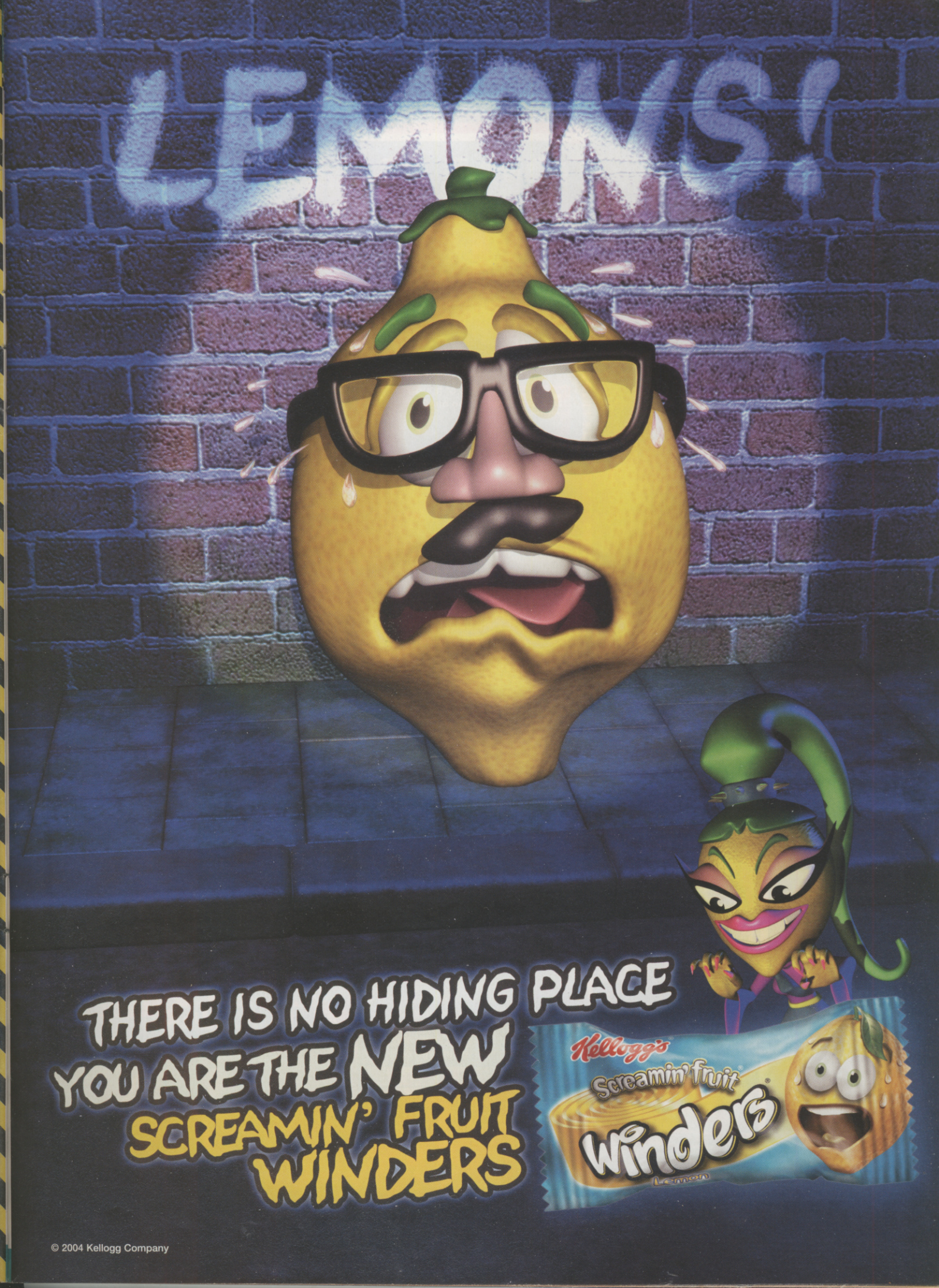


Kojima is considering a blood-splattered outfit that could be used to convince guards that you're dead!

DESIGN AND DOWNLOAD CAMO

Hideo Kojima has also confirmed that, soon after Metal Gear 3 is released over here, gamers will be able to download extra camo designs.

Also, Konami is planning to launch a camouflage design competition, which it will officially announce at E3. It's expected to kick off in July and the winning designs will appear on the official website. There's a chance you'll be able to download them into the game too. Nice!



© 2004 Kellogg Company

in Big Japan

CVG'S GOT A BRAND NEW MAN IN JAPAN AND HE'S HARDCORE. THIS MONTH HE HITS THE ARCADES

Sammy's had more new games than anyone else

ALL-NEW COIN GUZZLERS

Taito's big push was Zoids, and it receives my 'Best New Cabinet' award for 2004

February's AUO (Amusement Machine Operators' Union) show in Japan had few surprises in store for visitors (nearly 30,000 attended), but there was certainly plenty to see once you found your way past the crane games and pachinko machines.

Taito had some exceptionally good news for beat 'em up fans with Chaos Breaker, a fabulous-looking brawler featuring burly axe-wielding men doing what they do best. Their big push (and big screen) was devoted to a Zoids mech combat game, which looked and played like a four-legged Virtual On clone.

Sega's only new game was Ollie King, which is kind of like Crazy Taxi with a skateboard instead of a car. It even featured a wobbly faux-skateboard for a controller and handrails to keep injuries to a minimum.

Hidden in the back was the recently released Puyo Puyo Fever, a maddeningly cool suspended F-Zero AX cabinet, and a bizarre foot massager that told you what the lines on your feet meant. I'm not making this up!

Namco packed in the booth babes to ensure people clocked Wangan Midnight Maxi Boost, a streets of Tokyo racer. We're not sure if anyone noticed the game – maybe the advertising was too effective? I did my duty and checked it out – they looked ace in those shorts.

Konami rolled out the usual sequels to Pop N Music, Guitar Freaks, DrumMania and BeatMania, as well as an uninspired dual-screen four-player gun game called Wartran Troopers. It's Time Crisis with huge rifles, but with three friends it might be entertaining enough.

The big news was Sammy's booth, where it was announced all future SNK titles will release on the Atomis Wave platform instead of the antique Neo Geo. Sammy is now the company to watch, as it owns most of Sega and has SNK on the team. **Laurence**

Oversized plastic rifles for terrorist-blastin' action

HOT BUNNY GIRLS

COOL CABINETS!

JAPAN'S TOP-SELLING GAMES

1. Monster Hunter (PS2) Capcom ..... 119,336 copies
2. Pokémon Fire Red/Leaf Green (GBA) ..... 51,475 copies
3. Onimusha 3 (PS2) Capcom ..... 47,480 copies
4. Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes (GC) Konami ..... 41,524 copies
5. Ninja Gaiden (Xbox) Tecmo ..... 38,859 copies

RECURRING PAYNE

Take-Two has confirmed that a third Max Payne game will be gunning its way onto PC and consoles... eventually. "I think we'll take a few years to make the next one that much more spectacular," said head honcho Jeff Lapin.

iPOD MINI

Back in the March issue of CVG we reckoned the iPod Mini would cost £230. Apple has since revealed that the 4GB midget music box will only cost around £200.

GBA GOES ALL PSP

FILM STAR!

PLANET CVG GETS HANDS-ON WITH GBA'S UNOFFICIAL MOVIE AND MUSIC PLAYER

SUPPLIED BY WHITE DOG
WHITEDOG GAMES & ACCESSORIES
WWW.WHITEDOG.CO.UK

Within a few of hours of unwrapping our GBA movie player we had Blade II, the trailer for the next Spidey film, a couple of short grundy flicks and the new N.E.R.D album playing on it! But it sure as hell wasn't a breeze, or cheap.

You can pick the movie player up on import for about 35 quid, but you also need a Compact Flash memory card and a read/writer to transfer files from your PC. We managed to buy a decent read/writer for £15 and a 256MB card for 45 smackers. If you want to watch an entire movie you can't get away with less than 256 megs. All totted up, that's a total cost of around 95 quid! Considering PSP is expected to cost £200 when it goes on sale at the beginning of 2005, this is a total luxury item.

TRANSFER MARKET

The movie player comes with software that enables you to convert movie and music files into specific GBA files. It's dead simple to convert music files, but getting movies onto your GBA is trickier. If you want to convert a DVD you first need to download any program that converts a DVD into a compressed video file like an MPEG. This takes a while to work out, and even longer to transfer.

Then it's a case of saving that file onto your Compact Flash card using the software provided. This takes yonks. Once it's saved, assuming it hasn't crashed mid-save (the software's pretty dodgy), you slip the memory card into the top slot of the movie player, a game into the slot underneath, flick the switch on the side of the gadget to 'Movie' and you're good to go.

Hardly user-friendly, but if you've got a few spare notes clogging up your wallet and want to explore an exciting new side to your GBA, it's probably worth hooking yourself up with one.

The menu screens and options are a piece of piss to negotiate. The sound's a bit dodgy, though

THE LITTLE PICTURE

Here's a bunch of screenshots that we took of Blade II running on our GBA movie player. Occasionally it looks a bit blocky, but otherwise the visuals are surprisingly clear.

WATCH FILMS OR PLAY TUNES!

ACTUAL QUALITY

MANHUNT

This month we went over to Rockstar's London hangout to see the Xbox version of Manhunt. Visually slicker, check out CVG's review next issue for the final verdict.

THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK

CVG has managed to secure a handful of exclusive new pics of Riddick on Xbox. It's looking swish, like a cross between Doom 3 and Splinter Cell, and is still scheduled for launch this Summer, along with the film.

EXCLUSIVE

DOOM 3

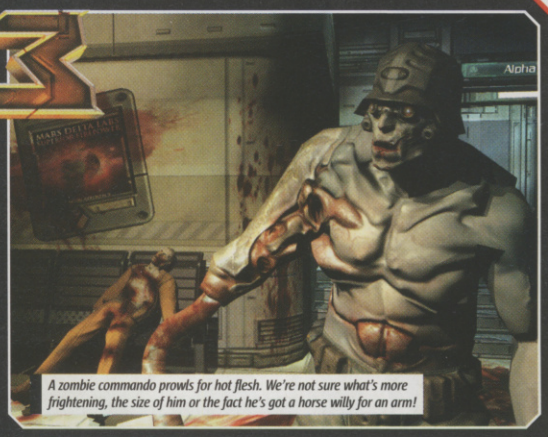
KILLER INFO ON THE GRUESOME XBOX VERSION

Until now details on the Xbox version of Doom 3 have been thinner than Bill Bailey's hairline. We all expected a straight port of the PC game, but the Xbox title promises to be a slightly altered beast.

Vicarious Visions is developing the game, and this month the company's top dog Karthik Bala revealed a new gameplay element for the console version.

"We're even including new features like co-op play, which require a tremendous amount of creativity and planning," he said. There's no doubt that it'll bear similarities to Halo's co-op campaign, with two players fiercely and tactically gunning their way through hordes of evil enemy a-holes. But remember there won't be any vehicles to bomb around in here. Also there's been no confirmation yet of online co-op play either.

This new development in the Doom 3 saga has got us thinking. Will the online multiplayer be different too? The PC version only features one to four players – could we see up to 16 on Xbox Live? All should become crystal this May at the E3 show in LA. Planet CVG is flying over to report on all the biggest games including Doom 3. So don't miss our full round-up of the events in our ultra-packed special edition issue on sale June 3.



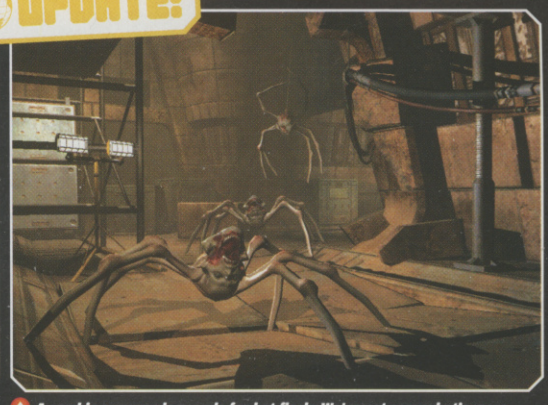
A zombie commando prowls for hot flesh. We're not sure what's more frightening, the size of him or the fact he's got a horse willy for an arm!

We've seen Doom III up close in action and the monsters really do look like this in game

HOT SHOT

Hell Knight attack: we've seen Doom 3 up close in action, and the monsters really do look like this in-game. It's even visible when they tense their muscles!

UPDATE!



A zombie commando prowls for hot flesh. We're not sure what's more frightening – the size of him or the fact that he has a horse willy for an arm

GT4 PROLOGUE UK BOUND

SONY PLANS AN EXTRA SPECIAL EDITION FOR BRITISH GAMERS

STOP PRESS

GT4 keeps skidding off into the distance, swerving around release dates as if they were road kill. But this month Sony has revealed that GT4 Prologue, a cut-down taster of the finished game, is headed for UK stores this May.

Japanese gamers have been caning this version for months, but UK fans can find some smugness in the fact that they'll be treated to a limited edition version. According to a Sony spokesperson who CVG spoke to earlier in the week, "It will come with a personal message from Kazunori [creator of GT] and a special making-of DVD."

GT has always delivered the best replays and Prologue is no exceptions

With GT4 having slipped to September, Sony's come up with a limited-edition taster of what's on its way

Playtime Bullies

FIGHTING FOR SPACE ON CVG'S CONSOLES THIS MONTH

PS2 MOST PLAYED!

FIGHT NIGHT 2004

Fight Night's done for boxing what Tiger Woods did for golf. It properly feels like you're swinging heavy hits using the new stick-flickin' punch system. Graeme's current CVG champ, but he's way too cocky and overdue a fisting.

XBOX MOST PLAYED!

NINJA GAIDEN

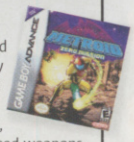
CVG's Paul Davies is the only person we know who still plays Dead Or Alive Volleyball for fun. We don't approve of such insane behaviour, but his rantings about Ninja Gaiden this month are all true. See Paul's special feature on page 68.

CUBE MOST PLAYED!

POKÉMON COLOSSEUM

We were getting a bit bored of all the handheld versions of Pokémon, and weren't that excited about Colosseum until we played the English language version. It's a proper Pokémon RPG in 3D, and it works brilliantly.

GBA MOST PLAYED!



METROID: ZERO MISSION

We love Metroid games. The way each adventure unravels, all the exploration, perfectly balanced weapons and eerie atmosphere. Zero Mission has a few wicked unlockable surprises when you complete it, like a cool stealth mode.

PC MOST PLAYED!

BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM

We've got all our PCs hooked up to it online, and we're not ready to pull the plug on the fun just yet. Two months running and it's still our most played PC game. Of all the Vietnam-based games out in the field at the moment, Battlefield is easily the coolest, edgiest and most authentic.

EVIL EVOLVES

HOT NEWS & GAMING GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE
NEWS SPECIAL

OUT EARLY 2005 ON GAMECUBE

RESIDENT EVIL 4 EMERGES FROM THE DARKNESS A DIFFERENT BEAST. PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A NEW REIGN OF TERROR ON GAMECUBE

Capcom's sickest series has evolved into a monstrous hulking beast with Resident Evil 4 giving birth to a new breed of survival horror.

Gone are the neck-chomping zombies, creaky-door loading screens, ropey camera angles and pre-rendered backgrounds. Developer Production Studio 4 has stripped out all Resi's annoying bits, rebuilt the series and created what CVG reckons will be the ultimate heart-stopping freak show.

Leon Kennedy returns as the floppy-haired hero, packing class new weapons and gadgets like laser-sighted pistols and Metal Gear-style digital binoculars.

Hired to track down the kidnapped daughter of the US President, Leon's eerie adventures begin when he arrives in an unnamed European village and the residents go bonkers and start attacking him.

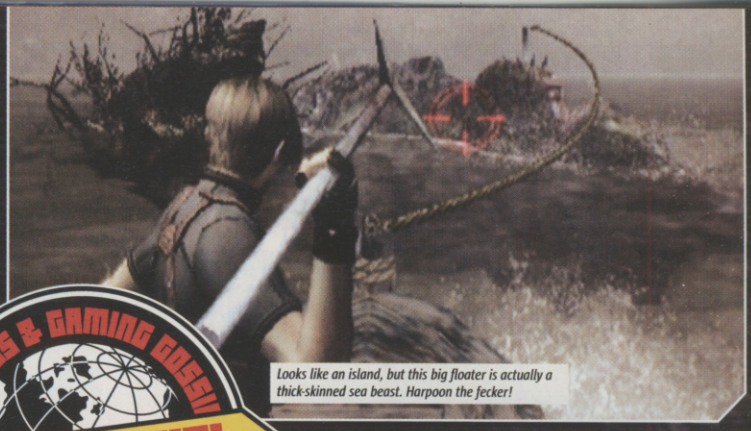
When we spoke to producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi about the weird villagers, he mysteriously posed the question, "Are these people really human beings?"

The implication is they're not – but they're not zombies! "As we wanted to create more of an action game," he went on, "it was necessary to design new enemies that fitted this faster pace."

This focus on creating a fast-paced actioner has meant that Resi 4 is far less clumsy than previous efforts. The fiddly menu system has been scrubbed, so you can see your health and ammo on screen. You should be able to scroll between weapons in real-time, and the combat is far more immediate and instinctive, with the camera rapidly pulling in over Leon's right shoulder when he draws a weapon – just like Sam Fisher in Splinter Cell.

We're trembling with excitement at the prospect of getting our hands bloody with it at E3 in May. Don't miss our first gory verdict coming soon. ✷

It's not exactly a mansion, but you can bet your ass that it's rammed to the rafters with pure Evil



Looks like an island, but this big floater is actually a thick-skinned sea beast. Harpoon the fecker!

Equip your digital binoculars with a quick tap of the A-button and use the C-stick to zoom in on events

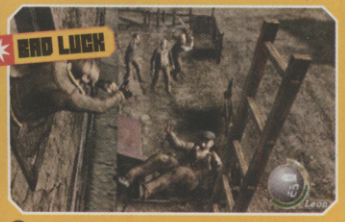
ACTION MAN

Leon can pull off loads of impromptu new moves at key moments with a well-timed button press, reminiscent of the system used in the Shenmue games.

We reckon it'll work brilliantly in Resi 4, because it opens up the possibility for loads of instant, tense and extravagant set-pieces, like diving through a window just as you're about to be lynched by an angry mob. But you'll need puma-like reflexes to nail these moves in time.

You could stomp on zombies' heads in the original Resident Evil on Cube, but now you can give enemies a good kicking

There'll be times when you're being hunted by masses of mental villagers and forced to improvise an escape route



The locals aren't like zombies. They're fast! Quickly push the ladder or they'll scamper up and start laying into you

EXCLUSIVE

Land a headshot with the shotgun and trigger an explosive fountain of claret. Every limb is shot-sensitive, so if you nail an enemy in the kneecap you'll cripple 'em

HOT SHOT

"THE ULTIMATE HEART-STOPPING FREAK SHOW"

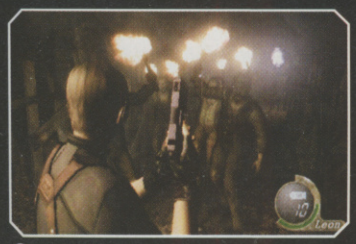
The cast of local folk look like extras from a Stella Artois advert, but they want blood, not booze

THE VILLAGE PEOPLE

They don't bite! But they will cut you to shreds and burn the evidence!

The redneck 'human' enemies in Resi 4 are far more sophisticated and dangerous than the brain-fried zombies of old.

For starters, it seems that they co-operate to hunt you down. Just look at the screenshot with the villagers carrying burning torches – they're sticking together and attacking in numbers! Plus they're smarter, faster and more resourceful than their flesh-eating predecessors. They'll lure you into traps and use any makeshift object as a weapon, from pitchforks to razor-sharp sickles and rusty axes.



This midnight manhunt is one of the most sinister moments we've witnessed in Resi 4

It all kicks off in the village square when Leon lobs a grenade into the crowd of loony bumpkins

KING-SIZE KILLERS

Check this boss! He looks like a Lord Of The Rings cave troll on elephant steroids.

We hate to think what he'll do to you if you get within grabbing range. He'll probably rip your limbs off and use them as toothpicks once he's gobbled up your bloody torso and munched on your melon. It's unbelievable that this is an actual in-game screenshot. There really is nothing on GameCube, PS2 or Xbox for that matter that looks this phenomenal.

During our recent chat with producer Kobayashi, he mentioned that there'd be stacks of other awesome boss monsters that you'll have to lock horns with. "There is also a big sea creature that looks a bit like the Loch Ness Monster." And you get to spear it!

Is this mutant muscle-head a genetic experiment or a creature from hell? We're as keen to find out as you are

"HE'LL PROBABLY RIP YOUR LIMBS OFF AND USE THEM AS TOOTHPICKS"

The cunning yokels have riddled the forest with tripwires hooked up to dynamite

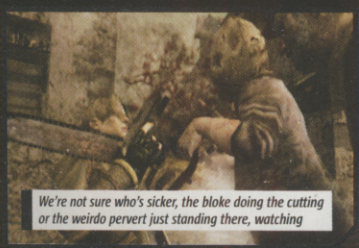
Stay alert every step of the way, or you'll miss a trap and blow your blonde ass into tomorrow

CHAINSAW MASSACRE

As well as ramping up the pace of the action, Capcom has upped the gore level.

In the main pic opposite you can see that Leon not only blows off a villager's head with a shotgun, he obliterates both shoulders and half his chest too. Sick, but bloody stylish.

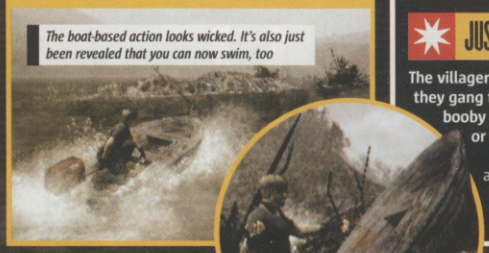
It gets worse. Loopy sack-headed locals can carve you up with chainsaws!

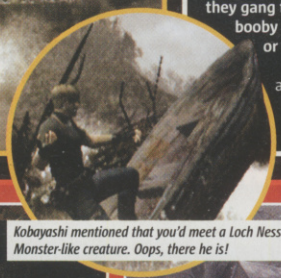

We're not sure who's sicker, the bloke doing the cutting or the weirdo pervert just standing there, watching

WE'RE GONNA NEED A BIGGER BOAT!

This is the first time in Resi history you actually get to use a vehicle, and here's the proof!

Capcom is yet to confirm whether Leon will be able to drive cars, ride bikes or pilot any other modes of transport. We'll keep you posted.

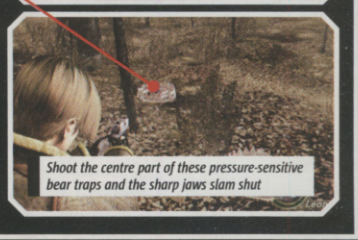

The boat-based action looks wicked. It's also just been revealed that you can now swim, too


Kobayashi mentioned that you'd meet a Loch Ness Monster-like creature. Oops, there he is!

JUS' TRIPPIN'

The villagers are crafty buggers. Not only will they gang together to take you down, they booby trap areas in the hope of crippling or killing you.

You should be able to disarm as well as avoid traps, but you'll need to tread lightly and hunt every inch of the screen for hidden tripwires and snares.


Shoot the centre part of these pressure-sensitive bear traps and the sharp jaws slam shut

RELOCATION, RELOCATION

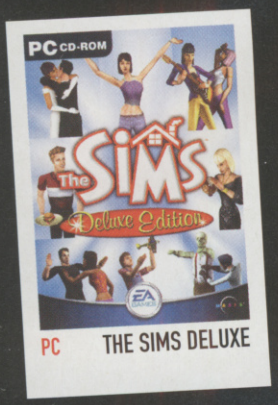
The village, lake and forest locations are staggeringly detailed, but this is the best bit – they're fully 3D! No pre-rendered backgrounds here.

The camera sticks directly behind you at all times, though it's not yet been announced whether you'll be able to adjust the angle manually as well.

Kobayashi also told us that these rural areas aren't the only locations in Resi 4. However, he refused to name specifics, saying, "We will reveal the other locations soon." The big tease.

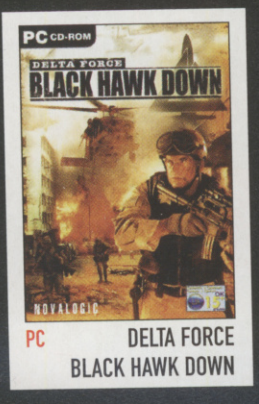
Resi's undergone a complete graphics overhaul and the results are blinding. These screenshots are so atmospheric they could almost be stills from a movie

2 games for £30
or 3 for £40

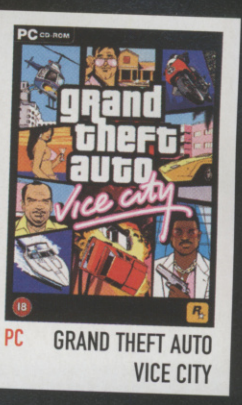


PC THE SIMS DELUXE

PC MAX PAYNE 2
THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE



PC DELTA FORCE
BLACK HAWK DOWN



PC GRAND THEFT AUTO
VICE CITY

PC LOCK ON
AIR COMBAT SIMULATION

PS2 GRAND THEFT AUTO
VICE CITY PLATINUM

PS2 MEDAL OF HONOR
FRONTLINE PLATINUM

PS2 ENTER THE MATRIX
PLATINUM

PS2 MIDNIGHT CLUB II

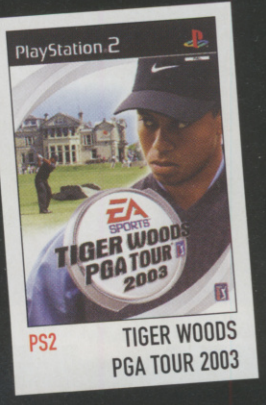
PS2 SPLINTER CELL
PLATINUM

PS2 GRAN TURISMO 3
PLATINUM

PS2 THE SIMPSONS
ROAD RAGE

THE LORD OF THE RINGS™
PS2 THE TWO TOWERS™

PS2 CRASH BANDICOOT
PLATINUM



PS2 TIGER WOODS
PGA TOUR 2003

whatever turns you on!

Virgin megastores

free delivery: virgin.com/megastores

Stickered product only: while stocks last. Offer ends 28 April 2004.

Gran Turismo®3 A-spec © 2001 Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All manufacturers, cars, brands and associated imagery featured in this game are trademarks and/or copyrighted materials of their respective owners. All rights reserved.
Published by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. Developed by Polyphony Digital Inc.

Sammy Studios has announced its latest bonkers brawler, Guilty Gear Isuka. Promising four-player co-op mayhem, it's exclusive to PS2 and will be battering its way into shops at the end of 2004.

WHEREFORE ART THOU ROMERO?

John Romero, legendary creator of Doom and Quake, has been put in charge of Midway's next Gauntlet game. Midway has yet to confirm, however, which machines it'll be appearing on and when it's coming out. We'll keep you posted.

Your mind is a dangerous weapon. It seems that you can make yourself turn see-through

Your surroundings look like they're fully interactive. Check it here: you can rip a TV from the ceiling and luzz it at someone!

You've got some cool mental abilities. Someone pisses you off, set the gorilla on him. 'Ave it!

SECOND SIGHT

First look

FIRST SHOTS OF FREE RADICAL'S BRAND NEW PSYCHIC THRILLER

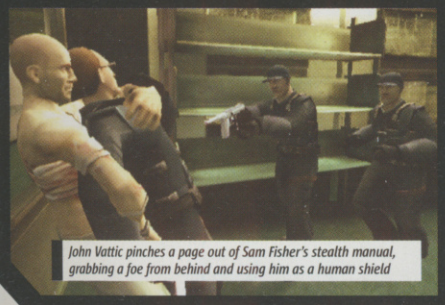
Mention Killzone to a PS2 lover and you'll be met with a dirty great quack of excitement. The mere utterance of Halo 2 gives Xbox fans a mini orgasm. But there's only one console-based FPS that promises to dish out equal dollops of heavenly pleasure to PS2, Xbox and GameCube owners. TimeSplitters 3!

Planet CVG brought you the first news of Free Radical's new über shooter back in the March issue. However, TimeSplitters 3 isn't the only multiformat masterpiece that Free Radical has tucked up its baggy sleeve. This month it's revealed the first drool-inducing details and pics of Second Sight, a mysterious new adventure for PS2, Xbox and GameCube due out at the end of 2004.

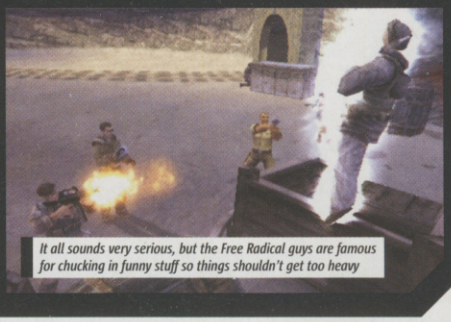
Free Radical's sticking with its trademark graphical style for Second Sight, but this ain't no mind-bending TimeSplitters-style gunner. This third-person action epic will have you sneaking around and solving puzzles as well as busting heads.

You play a freaky fella by the name of John Vattic. He's a nutjob who's just woken up from a coma in a prison with no memory, a mashed-up mind, and beaten-up body. He's a victim of some nasty surgery and dodgy experiments, which have left him with mad mental powers. You'll be able to use the power of his mind to do major damage, such as levitating objects from far away and hurling them at enemies.

It's a new type of game for Free Radical, but we reckon that if it can do for adventure games what TimeSplitters 2 did for console shooters we're in for a wicked treat. Watch this space for more on Second Sight and all the scoop on TimeSplitters 3.



John Vattic pinches a page out of Sam Fisher's stealth manual, grabbing a foe from behind and using him as a human shield



It all sounds very serious, but the Free Radical guys are famous for chucking in funny stuff so things shouldn't get too heavy

OUT ON XBOX, PS2 & PC THIS AUTUMN

Guide your four-man squad stealthily through thick jungle terrain, avoiding ambushes

CONFLICT: VIETNAM

THE CONFLICT SERIES WASHES THE SAND OUT IT'S BUM CRACK AND PREPARES FOR JUNGLE WARFARE

PS2, Xbox and PC are preparing themselves for a full-blown assault with the arrival of Conflict: Vietnam this autumn.

In keeping with the Conflict code of war, you're going to have to lead a four-man team through 14 cutthroat missions. Plus this being Nam 'n' all, prepare yourself for a freakin' horror show. The Viet Cong are evil buggers, littering the jungle with hideous booby traps, like spike-filled pits and water mines. Unlike Shell Shock, Conflict: Vietnam lets you take a load off and bomb around in cool authentic vehicles, including gunboats and helicopters.

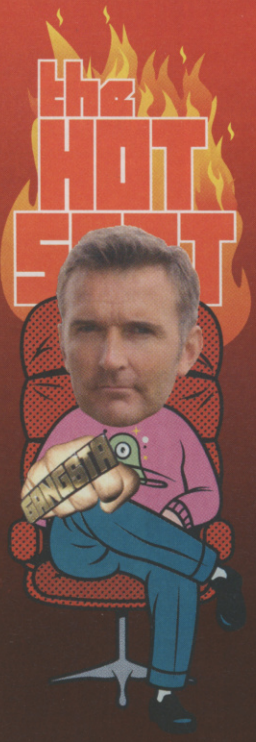
BOOBY TRAPS

COME GET SOME

LAND, SEA & AIR

JUNGLE FEVER

the HOT SEAT



CVG buckles up with Driv3r's main man Martin Edmondson and talk Grand Theft Auto

CVG: Given that Driver essentially pioneered the gameplay style that GTA has profited so much from, how do you see Driv3r's relation to the GTA games?

Edmondson: *Driver was the first of the 'open city action driving' games and although elements are inevitably common between Driver and GTAII, I still think Driver occupies its own niche within the category. Vice City is a great game for sure, but could never be called a car chase game, which is the main focus of Driv3r.*

CVG: What do you feel Driv3r offers players who love GTA but might not have experienced the Driver series?

Edmondson: *It's a different experience really in that it is based on the concept of Hollywood car chases. Driv3r takes a very realistic approach to this with real physics/crashes and photo-real-looking environments. This allows us to create the most realistic and satisfying car smashes ever seen in a videogame. So although we don't feature as much out-of-car activity as GTA, anyone who loves car chases and automotive destruction generally should enjoy Driv3r. We also focus heavily on the level of destruction you can do with machine guns – shooting cars to pieces and riddling them with bullet holes. Come to think of it, Driv3r is about destruction in pretty much any form!*

CVG: Was it frustrating to see the technological achievements of Driver 2 surpassed by GTAIII?

Edmondson: *Not really, because GTAIII was written on a completely new generation of hardware and a long time after Driver 2, so having the Driver technology surpassed was inevitable. In fact, the GTA team would have done a pretty poor job if they couldn't surpass PSone technology on a PS2!*

CVG: How did you react to Tanner's 'cameo' in GTAIII? Any plans for revenge?

Edmondson: *It was pretty funny. If we have time we will do something, but unfortunately jokes and cheats have to come further down the list of priorities.*

CVG: How do you think players will react to Driv3r's depiction of Miami, given that Vice City is still fresh in their minds?

EDMONDSON: *Very differently, especially if they have actually been to Miami as it's a pretty detailed and realistic interpretation of the city. There are 156 miles of road and 35,400 buildings in Driv3r. We have also always approached the look of the cities in Driver in a photo-realistic way. Lots of complex detail which all aims to convince the player they are in the real city rather than a fantasy location loosely based on the 'feel' of a real place. This we feel makes them more rewarding to explore.*

CVG: What scope have you given players to free-roam in the cities? Are there hidden missions, bonuses, Easter eggs etc?

Edmondson: *In some missions you can just drive around for ages if you choose to do so, but we have included the Take A Ride mode in there from Driver 1 and 2. This allows you to select any city, any start point, any vehicle and choose your weather and time of day set-up. Take A Ride just lets you rag about and have fun basically, in your favourite environment.*

"DRIVER WAS INFLUENCED BY 1970S CAR CHASE MOVIES"

CVG: What cultural influences (movies, real-life gangsters etc) have shaped the Driver series and Driv3r in particular?

Edmondson: *Driver was influenced originally by the car chase movies of the early Seventies such as The Driver, The French Connection, Bullitt and so on. Big powerful US muscle cars with armfuls of opposite lock oversteer. Car chases in more modern films tend to be very poor in comparison with the sole exception of Ronin. This was a specific influence in Driv3r actually, and contributed to our decision to set part of the game in Nice.*

"DRIV3R IS ABOUT DESTRUCTION IN PRETTY MUCH ANY FORM"

CVG: Why do you think gangster/underworld/criminal themes are so popular in videogames?

Edmondson: *There is probably a side to most people that craves the excitement of the underworld/seedier sides of life without the 'excitement' of actually being slung in jail. Most actors will tell you that playing the bad guy is much more rewarding than playing the good guy.*

DEVIL MAY TRY AGAIN

The games industry is alive with chatter surrounding a new Devil May Cry game. Word has it that Capcom has already begun work on DMC3, and we're expecting an official announcement very soon.

JAK & CLANK III

Sony has lifted the lid on Jak III and Ratchet & Clank 3, but these screenshots look like they've just been ripped from the old games! Shame. Both titles are coming to PS2 this autumn.

MIGHTY JOE

Rumours are flying that a sequel to Viewtiful Joe is in development. There are also whispers of co-op play where Joe and another character pull off two-player combos together. Keep 'em peeled for an update next month.

nationalleague

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

GAME | CVG | KONAMI

LOCATION REPORT: CHINGFORD, ESSEX

WWW.PESLEAGUE.CO.UK

FEEL THE GOAL RUSH!

SCORCHING GOALS SET PES LEAGUE ON FIRE!

The PES League's new signings really made a name for themselves this month. They're winning enough games to rate at the very top of their leagues. The scariest part is the number of goals going in, meaning that goal difference is on their side too.

LATEST FLAMES

Two of the most impressive debuts are Jon Lee (Newcastle), and Ross Forsyth (Edinburgh). Jon, die-hard Toon fan, took home a glorious 7-0 win, leaving hapless Tom Hodgson limping through the rest of the afternoon. Jon is a self-proclaimed attacking player, who gambles everything on his ability to control the run of play going forward. When it paid off, it gave Jon more great results like the 5-0 over David Earl, and when it didn't Jon only suffered 1-0 (twice, as it turned out). As for Ross, he would have done enough to spoil Martin Turner's honeymoon period with a modest 1-0, but he stormed to victory with six of his seven debut games that included a 6-0 over Rob Downs, 5-2 against Colin Ho and 4-0 versus David Murphy.

SMOULDERING IRONS

If you live in Cardiff, and you weren't down at E-Quest last month, you missed Nigel Keelson-anfu's tidy demolition of Simon Ham. You also missed your opportunity to challenge potential league champion, Jonathan Francis. Cardiff is a relatively small league, people, so you can be a big fish in a small pond. If you're within travelling distance, we recommend you take this opportunity!

Bath was also quiet this month. Again, we have to wonder why more guys aren't taking the fight to Messrs Keith and Mikey Wheeler, and current league-topper Steve Godfrey. It's a chance too good to miss! Maybe you're biding your time waiting for the tougher games to play themselves through.

WARNING! WARNING! WARNING!

Yeah, about waiting for easy games: not a good plan, and could lose you respect, maybe even points. While good guys like Chris Ogirri (Stevenage), Femi Paul and Tim Adegboye (Harrow), Andrew Flintoff (Newcastle) and recently Osman Idris (London, E4) are big enough to face all their challengers, there's still a bunch of players who think it's smart to hang back. Sorry to be with the lecture and all, but if you're registered with PES League, don't waste your chances, okay?

Oz, Gerry and Tim all wrapped up for the cold. Tim is usually a lot happier than this, honest

EAR PLUGS OPTIONAL

We had the 'pleasure' of attending an afternoon of Osman Idris' stand-up comedy this month, over in London's E4. In fact, there were jibes pouring out of this guy's mouth when he was sitting down too!

We pity everyone who has to listen to him every month at Red Computing, but thanks all the same for having us along! Especially Paul, our league rep, and the very chilled Tobie Daniels, Rajiv Ghir and Samet Cetiner. We should also mention David Sefah, our reigning league champ, who has played 12, won 11 and drawn one! Be afraid once more...

Oz talks a good game, but he's a true player

© Masterfoods 2004

Charts

UK TOP 20 BESTSELLERS

FIND OUT WHICH GAMES ARE FLYING OFF THE SHELVES AND WHICH ARE NOSE-DIVING INTO OBSCURITY, HOW THEY SCORED IN CVG AND WHAT WE RECKON TO THEM NOW

ChartTrack The official UK weekly leisure software charts ©2002 ELSPA Ltd, compiled by ChartTrack, with the name ELSPA acting as a link to our website www.elspa.com

POSITION	MOVE	GAME	FORMAT/S	CVG SCORE	SUMMARY	LAST WEEK	WEEKS IN CHART
1	NEW	JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING (EA)	PS2 XB GC GBA	83%	007's got the Midas touch with the ladies, and this month he slips his gold finger into the top slot. Not one to be sniffed at.	-	1
2	↓	FINAL FANTASY X-2 (EA)	PS2	85%	Square Enix sexes up the series with more fetish outfits than you'd find at an Ann Summers party. Lap it up lads!	1	2
3	↓	SONIC HEROES (SEGA)	PS2 XB GC	62%	We love Sonic, but we're sure the Blue speedball is going grey. He's getting old and it shows in Heroes' dated gameplay	2	4
4	↑	NORTON INTERNET SECURITY 2004 (NORTON)	PC	-	The most up-to-date and powerful vaccine against all those filthy viruses that you wouldn't even touch with your mate's PC	5	11
5	↓	NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND (EA)	PS2 XB GC GBA	91%	Burnout 3's still a long way off, leaving EA's masterful maxed up motor to tear up the streets unchallenged	3	15
6	↓	THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN (VIVENDI)	PS2 XB GC PC	67%	Homer hangs in there for his 18th week in the charts, somehow bumping off Rockstar's GTA: Double Pack. One question: whyyyyyyy?	4	18
7	↑	PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME (UBISOFT)	PS2 XB GC PC	89%	It's a little too short and easy to complete, but remains one of the most stylish platform actioners ever made. Essential!	8	9
8	↓	LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING (EA)	PS2 XB PC GBA	70%	We've discovered a cheat! Press all the buttons to unlock Arwen, then tap Start 1226 times to whip her Elvish knickers off. Sorry, but we can dream	7	16
9	↓	FIFA 2004 (EA)	PS2 XB PS1 GBA GC	79%	FIFA's no match for PES3 but let's be thankful that Urban Freestyle Soccer hasn't made it into the charts	2	19
10	↑	MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN (EA)	PS2 XB GC	65%	You can't go anywhere without tripping over a World War II game, and this is more of a gaming landmine worth avoiding	12	14
11	RE ENTRY	FINDING NEMO (THQ)	PS2 GC PC GBA	48%	Pixar's slippery tosspot slithers back into the top 20, mostly thanks to the recent release of the movie on DVD. Good movie, arse game	-	14
12	↓	MAFIA (TAKE 2)	PS2 PC	74%	They should make a game based on The Sopranos. Modern day Mafioso action, with laughs, ultra violence and extra Bada Bing!	10	8
13	→	GRAND THEFT AUTO: DOUBLE PACK (ROCKSTAR)	PS2 XB	95%	Rockstar's powerhouse tag-team hasn't budged this week, and we're expecting a pick up in sales since the San Andreas announcement	13	10
14	↓	THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT (EA)	PS2 XB GC GBA	73%	If you get a kick from bossing people about and messing with their lives, you're probably a dick... and might like Bustin' Out	9	11
15	↑	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY (ROCKSTAR)	PS2 PC	95%	Tommy Vercetti's award-winning epic has been in the charts for over a year and is still causing riots on PS2 and PC. All-time classic!	17	53
16	RE ENTRY	MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES (MIDWAY)	PS2 XB	52%	If you enjoy complaining about teenagers, smoking a pipe, tending to your allotment and watching Bargain Hunt, you might like this	-	3
17	↓	SPLINTER CELL (UBISOFT)	PS2 XB	89%	Sam's original shadow op isn't a patch on Pandora Tomorrow, but at £12.99 on Xbox it's the best budget sneaker around	15	38
18	↓	EYETOY: PLAY (SONY)	-	-	It was the must-have party game of 2003 and is still holding its own in 2004. But we predict a drop in sales when SingStar launches	11	35
19	RE ENTRY	TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 (EA)	PS2 XB GBA PC	85%	Probably the second best multiplayer sports game out there (behind PES3), and the single-player mode is fookin' huge	-	18
20	↓	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: SEASON 03/04 (EIDOS)	PC	84%	Eidos' stat-happy figure-fiddler clings onto the bottom rung in the top 20. Power trip heaven for footie fanatics	19	15

£5 OFF ANY GAME AT

Virgin megastores

* STORE NO:
* RECEIPT NO:
* SALES ASST. INITIALS:

1. This voucher entitles the holder to £5 off full-priced games at Virgin Megastores
2. Only one voucher may be redeemed per purchase
3. This voucher may not be exchanged in whole or part for cash and cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotional voucher or multibuy offer
4. The voucher is valid at any Virgin Megastore or Virgin Megastore Xpress store until 05/05/04
5. Defaced or damaged vouchers will not be accepted

2 412459 005006

whatever turns you on!

Virgin megastores

virgin.com/megastores

CVG MOST WANTED

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS (PS2)
Alex: "Escape from Alcatraz, jump over the Golden Gate Bridge! Is San Andreas a Vice City-beater? Bet yo ass it is!"

2. METAL GEAR SOLID 3 (PS2)
Pete: "All the new info on how the camo works in MGS3 has given me jungle fever. Can't wait to get hands-on at E3."

3. BURNOUT 3 (XB, PS2)
Graeme: "Okay, so there's no licensed motors and no mention of customisation (please!), but this little gas guzzler's gonna be the purest shit-off-a-shovel driving experience ever."

4. RESIDENT EVIL 4 (GC)
Lee: "No zombies?! A bizarre move for the series, but I reckon this could be an exciting new direction for Resi."

5. ONIMUSHA 3 (PS2)
Paul: "Everyone's talking about it. The intro is amazingly ridiculous. On course to be the best in the trilogy."

READERS' MOST WANTED

Patrick Farley is such an Xbox nut that he got a green X tattooed on his arm (and Bill Gates' face onto his right buttcheek).

1. HALO 2 (XB)
"It's gonna to make Killzone look like a cack PSone game."

2. BREAKDOWN (XB)
"A first-person fighting adventure only on Xbox. Eat that Sony!"

3. DRIV3R (XB)
"I love the style of the graphics. Better looking than Vice City."

4. SHELLSHOCK: 'NAM 67 (XB)
"Read about it in Planet CVG and it looks brilliantly brutal."

5. DOOM III (XB)
"Last year's E3 demo almost knocked me off my chair."

Send us a photo of yourself and a list of the five games you're most excited about with 15 words on each explaining why.
Readers' Most Wanted, CVG, Dennis Publishing Ltd, 9 Dallington Street, London EC1V 0BQ. Email: mailbag.cvg @dennis.co.uk (subject: Most Wanted)

PHANTOM PRESENCE

The Phantom console is almost as mysterious as its name suggests. Little is known about what games are planned for the PC-in-a-box and how it'll work. However this week Infinium Labs announced that the machine would be playable at E3 in May.

VF GETS IN TUNE

Last month we brought you news of an updated version of VF4 Evo that was rumoured to be in development. Now we can confirm Sega is working on Virtua Fighter 4 Tuned. New moves and arenas are expected, but no mention of any new fighters.

"There's a great chance that you will see Burnout on PSP"

Alex Ward, Director of Design at Criterion

RELEASE DATES

CVG BRINGS YOU THE ULTIMATE CUT-OUT-AND-KEEP RELEASE SCHEDULE. MARK UP YOUR FAVES AND KEEP THIS LIST ON YOU AT ALL TIMES...

APRIL 2004

			I WANT IT
PS2	WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY	APRIL 9	
XB	WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY	APRIL 9	
PC	WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY	APRIL 9	
PS2	CONAN	APRIL 9	
XB	CONAN	APRIL 9	
GC	CONAN	APRIL 9	
PC	CONAN	APRIL 9	
GBA	METROID ZERO MISSION	APRIL 9	
XB	KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE	APRIL 9	
XB	GALLEON	APRIL 9	
PS2	DEADLY SKIES 3	APRIL 9	
PC	BEYOND DIVINITY	APRIL 9	
PS2	ALIAS	APRIL 9	
XB	ALIAS	APRIL 9	
GC	POKEMON CHANNEL	APRIL 9	
PS2	THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS	APRIL 9	
XB	THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS	APRIL 9	
PS2	RISE TO HONOUR	APRIL 16	
XB	RUN LIKE HELL	APRIL 16	
PC	TRANSPORT GIANT	APRIL 23	
XB	VIETNAM	APRIL 23	
PS2	AQUANOX	APRIL 23	
XB	POP IDOL	APRIL 23	
XB	MANHUNT	APRIL 23	
PC	THE 5TH DISCIPLE	APRIL 23	
GBA	DIGIMON RACING	APRIL 23	
XB	SYBERIA 2	APRIL 30	
PS2	FIGHT NIGHT 2004	APRIL 30	
XB	FIGHT NIGHT 2004	APRIL 30	
PS2	*HITMAN: CONTRACTS*	*APRIL 30*	
XB	HITMAN: CONTRACTS	APRIL 30	
PC	HITMAN: CONTRACTS	APRIL 30	
PS2	RIDING SPIRITS 2	APRIL 30	
PS2	WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2	APRIL 30	
GBA	BARBARIAN	APRIL 30	
GC	BARBARIAN	APRIL 30	
GBA	ROBOCOP	APRIL 30	
GC	ROBOCOP	APRIL 30	
XB	THE SUFFERING	APRIL 30	
PS2	THE SUFFERING	APRIL 30	
PS2	GOBLIN COMMANDER	APRIL 30	
XB	GOBLIN COMMANDER	APRIL 30	
PS2	PROJECT ZERO 2	APRIL 30	
XB	TOP GUN 2	APRIL 30	
PS2	CY GIRLS	APRIL 30	
PS2	READ DEAD REVOLVER	APRIL 30	
XB	READ DEAD REVOLVER	APRIL 30	
XB	TOCA RACE DRIVER 2	APRIL 30	
PS2	WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL 2004	APRIL	
XB	WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL 2004	APRIL	
PC	WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL 2004	APRIL	
PS2	MALICE	APRIL	
XB	MALICE	APRIL	
PS2	POWERDROME	APRIL	
XB	POWERDROME	APRIL	
PS2	DANCE UK: EXTRA TRAX	APRIL	
PS	DANCE UK: EXTRA TRAX	APRIL	
GC	TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES	APRIL	
PS2	TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES	APRIL	
PC	TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES	APRIL	
PS2	INTERNATIONAL GOLF PRO	APRIL	

MAY 2004

			I WANT IT
GC	POKEMON COLOSSEUM	MAY 3	
GC	EURO 2004	MAY 7	
PS2	EURO 2004	MAY 7	
XB	EURO 2004	MAY 7	
PC	EURO 2004	MAY 7	
PS2	TRANSFORMERS	MAY 7	
XB	LEGENDS OF WRESTLING: SHOWDOWN	MAY 7	
PC	LEGENDS OF WRESTLING: SHOWDOWN	MAY 7	
PS2	LEGENDS OF WRESTLING: SHOWDOWN	MAY 7	
PC	PERIMETER	MAY 9	
XB	*NINJA GAIDEN*	*MAY 12*	
PC	CSI 2	MAY 14	
PS2	VAN HELSING	MAY 14	
XB	VAN HELSING	MAY 14	
XB	OPERATION FLASHPOINT: COLD WAR CRISIS	MAY 14	
PS2	SYPHON FILTER: OMEGA STRAIN	MAY 14	
PS2	SINGSTAR	MAY 21	
PC	ANNO 1503: TREASURES, MONSTERS AND PIRATES	MAY 21	
PS2	CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH	MAY 26	
PC	TWO THRONES	MAY 27	
PS2	HARRY POTTER: PRISONER OF AZKABAN	MAY 28	
XB	HARRY POTTER: PRISONER OF AZKABAN	MAY 28	
PC	HARRY POTTER: PRISONER OF AZKABAN	MAY 28	
GC	HARRY POTTER: PRISONER OF AZKABAN	MAY 28	
GBA	HARRY POTTER: PRISONER OF AZKABAN	MAY 28	
PS2	THE X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE	MAY 28	
PS2	ADIBOO AND THE ENERGY THIEVES	MAY 28	
PC	ADIBOO AND THE ENERGY THIEVES	MAY 28	
XB	OBSCURE	MAY 28	
PS2	TRIVIAL PURSUIT UNHINGED	MAY 28	
PC	ALIAS	MAY 28	
PS2	*KARAOKE STAGE*	*MAY*	
PS2	DISGAEA: THE HOUR OF DARKNESS	MAY	
PC	SCHIZM II	MAY	
PS2	ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL	MAY	

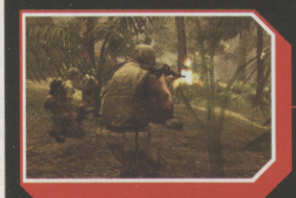
"Next to Halo, this has to be an irresistable reason to own an Xbox – it slaughters any other ninja game ever!"

"Brilliant technology, like a robotic Simon Cowell with smaller man-boobs and the chance to make a tit out of yourself"

HOT PICKS

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THESE SIZZLING NEWCOMERS IN YOUR LOCAL GAMES SHACK

"It's refreshing to know that you can just go in guns blazing. To hell with undercover, just bring it on!"



"Gritty, ultra-realistic shooter from the makers of Killzone that portrays the horrors of war in ways never seen before"

"Remake of side-scrolling bestial beat 'em up from the Mega Drive days, but hopefully a lot less crap this time out"

JUNE 2004

			I WANT IT
XB	ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL	MAY	
PS2	DRIV3R	JUNE 1	
XB	DRIV3R	JUNE 1	
PC	FAIR STRIKE	JUNE 4	
PS2	SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW	JUNE 11	
GC	SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW	JUNE 11	
PC	SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW	JUNE 11	
GC	MARIO GOLF: TOADSTOOL TOUR	JUNE 16	
PC	GROUND CONTROL II: OPERATION EXODUS	JUNE 18	
PS2	SHREK 2	JUNE 25	
XB	SHREK 2	JUNE 25	
GC	SHREK 2	JUNE 25	
GBA	SHREK 2	JUNE 25	
PC	SHREK 2	JUNE 25	
XB	SHADOW OPS	JUNE 25	
PS2	*SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67*	*JUNE*	
XB	SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67	JUNE	
PC	SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67	JUNE	
PS2	ONIMUSHA 3	JUNE	
PS2	PHANTOM DUST	JUNE	
PS2	THE MOVIES	JUNE	
XB	THE MOVIES	JUNE	
GC	THE MOVIES	JUNE	
PC	THE MOVIES	JUNE	
PS2	MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 3	JUNE	
XB	MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 3	JUNE	
XB	THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS	JUNE	
PC	THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS	JUNE	
XB	BREAKDOWN	JUNE	
PS2	*ALTERED BEAST*	*JUNE*	

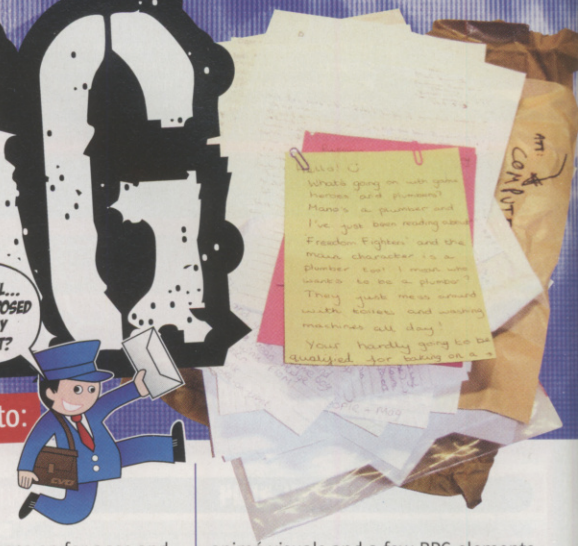
JULY 2004

			I WANT IT
XB	SUDEKI	JUNE	
PS2	SPIDER-MAN 2	JULY 9	
XB	SPIDER-MAN 2	JULY 9	
GC	SPIDER-MAN 2	JULY 9	
GBA	SPIDER-MAN 2	JULY 9	
PS2	LEGEND OF KAY	JULY 23	
PS2	MONSTER HUNTER	JULY	
PS2	ATHENS 2004	JULY	

RELEASE DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

EMAIL US AT: MAILBAG.CVG@DENNIS.CO.UK

MAILBAG



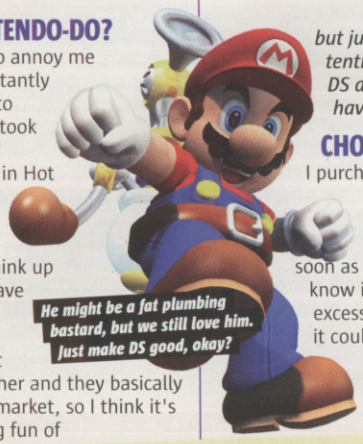
You read the magazine, you play the games... tell us what's up! Send your thoughts to: Mailbag, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 9 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 0BQ

DEAD AS A NINTENDO-DO?

It's really starting to annoy me the way CVG is constantly sticking the boot into Nintendo. First you took the piss out of GameCube's lineup in Hot or Not, and now you're telling us Ninty must have been on drugs to think up the DS. Nintendo have more experience in the games industry than both Microsoft and Sony put together and they basically own the handheld market, so I think it's wrong to be making fun of them. Nintendo fans are the most loyal gamers out there and since you are a multiformat magazine you should be treating all platforms equally.

Sammy, via email

CVG *Let's get this straight. We love Nintendo. We grew up suckling at Nintendo's gameplay teat. But the fact remains that the big N's been making some pretty strange decisions lately, and we have to comment on that. Sometimes you need a bit of tough love, but just because we're not tenting our trousers over DS doesn't mean we don't have love for Nintendo.*

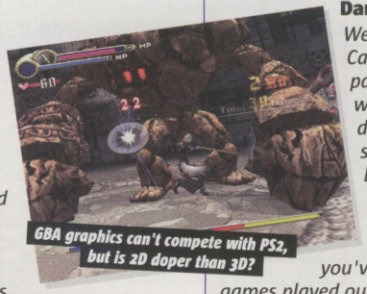

He might be a fat plumbing bastard, but we still love him. Just make DS good, okay?

CHOICE CUTS

I purchased an Xbox just before Christmas and since then I've been buying games as soon as I see them. I'd like to know if my collection is excessive yet and if you think it could be the 'Gamer's Choice'? I have Halo, GTA Double Pack, Project Gotham 2, NFS Underground, [list goes on for ages and includes nudey shockers BMX XXX and DOAX Volleyball...]

Kristian, Clun

CVG *Apart from the fact that you're obviously rich enough to have Paris Hilton scratch your arse every time your butler hasn't wiped it properly, your taste in games is fairly exemplary. Apart from perhaps BMX XXX and DOAX Volleyball: nakedness yes, but quality no. We've got our own CVG Gamer's Choice now. Anyone want to disagree with our Big 50?*


GBA graphics can't compete with PS2, but is 2D doper than 3D?

Daniel, Bristol

We disagree that Castlevania's 85% rating passes for 'not bad' – we loved it and were delighted to see the series return to Drac-bashing form. But with Viewtiful Joe showing that 2D games can still rock the house, maybe you've got a point. Are 3D games played out?

I HATE GAMES

I really find it annoying that we spend hundreds of pounds on consoles and several annoying things still happen in games. Like crap lip sync: how frickin' hard can it be to time it properly? And when limbs go through solid objects, which seems like a last generation problem to me and should have been sorted out. How about crap graphics particularly around the face and hands? Enemy AI is still rubbish. And above all, 'realistic' games still don't look realistic enough for my liking.

Hodgkiss, via email

CVG *Yeah, games suck. They're crap. We absolutely hate it when the twenty hours of pant-creaming fun we've invested in a game is wasted by a tiny glitch and badly-drawn hands. It must be much more enjoyable just being a miserable moaning git.*

Tell you what, we'd love to have a squeeze of Nurse CVG's shoulder buttons

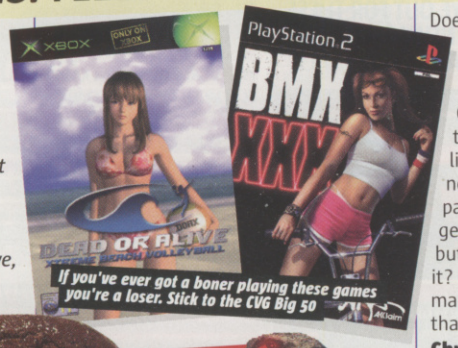
"TAKE YOUR GAMECUBE PAD AND GENTLY SQUEEZE THE L AND R BUTTONS. FEELS NICE DOESN'T IT?"

MEMORIES AND MAMMORIES

Does anyone else have a GameCube memory card with 1019 blocks? (That's 64Mb!) Because I bought one a year ago when I got my GameCube, but I don't see them any more, only those little 251 cards. On another note, take your GameCube pad and then randomly and gently squeeze the L and R buttons. Feels nice doesn't it? I think Nintendo should make a game based around that. No?

Chris, via email

CVG *You can get crazy 64Mb memory units but they're not official Nintendo gear. Try www.lik-sang.com. As for that shoulder button game idea, we think you might be onto something. A rhythm-action nork (or nut, must remember our female readers) squeezing game, possibly with licensed porn stars and a seventies funk soundtrack?*



If you've ever got a boner playing these games you're a loser. Stick to the CVG Big 50

3D OR NOT 3D?

Having been a huge fan of Castlevania since the SNES version I was wondering if, after two dodgy attempts at 3D vampire slaying and one not bad attempt (85%, CVG 270), perhaps Konami should revert to the tried-and-tested formula? In my opinion a 2D Castlevania with amazing animé visuals and a few RPG elements would be much more welcome than yet another 3D platformer. Anyone agree?

CVG STRIKER

Fish, chips and lawnmowers. What a pile of shite

ASSAULT AND BATTERY

My aim in life is to make a computer game and I've come up with an idea called Need For Weeding. You go round doing jobs in the garden like mowing the lawn or cutting the hedge. You get money (for how well you do) with which you can buy better equipment. At the end of the game you get to do the Queen's garden. If you don't like that idea, how about Chip Shop Manager? Could you give me any tips?

Tom, Shrewsbury

CVG *Oh Tom. You seem like a nice lad but, frankly, that idea sucks. And Chip Shop Manager? Do you live in some kind of hermetically sealed bubble where the most exciting things in the world are lawnmowers and greasy food? Here's a tip - design a game with guns, blood, robots, meerkats with lasers for eyes and some boobs. Now THAT would get a bling CVG Platinum Award.*

TEXT 2 B HEARD

TEXT YOUR MAIL TO: 83125

How to enter: first type 'CVG MAIL' and then enter your message!

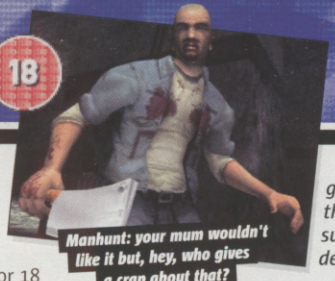
TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

AGE RAGE

I, like many other kids across the UK, own games with a 15 or 18 age certificate and I am only 13. What's the point of having age ratings on games when probably less than half of people who own games like GTA or the Getaway are actually 18?

Dan Taylor, Kent.

CVG If a game has a 15 or 18 BBFC age rating then it's illegal for retailers to supply the game to anyone under that age. That doesn't mean your folks can't buy you it, and we reckon most parents don't even realise how violent games like Manhunt are. Still, if you don't expose yourself to gruesome violence then how are you supposed to get desensitised to it?



Manhunt: your mum wouldn't like it but, hey, who gives a crap about that?

GENDER BRIDGES BUILT...

Saw the letter about girl gamers and I have to say that not all girls are into cute games. I know girls who love playing games like GTA, Manhunt, Silent hill, Clock Tower, Tekken and SoulCalibur. So occasionally they'll play Bomberman or Poy-Poy, but you get the picture. Let's try to keep it in mind that girl gamers play some of the games us men like to play.

Sam, Petersfield

You wanted to know if girl gamers exist – they do, and I'm one. I've been playing for 14 years so you can call me a hardcore gamer. I never think of anything except games. But it's a shame most of the games are male dominated (magazines too... tut tut!). I'm also a huge fan of MGS and Snake has the sexiest ass imaginable. I wish guys had asses like that in real life, just as much as you guys wish we all had tits like Lara Croft!

Jacinta, Bromley

SHORT & CURLIES

Notice anything other than the April Fool's gag? Let us know

ALL KILLER, NO FILLER

Nice April Fools joke! It's good to see you are still holding your time honoured traditions even though you have changed your look.

Vishal, via email

Here's us slaving away for weeks and weeks and weeks to redesign the magazine and you congratulate us on the April Fool's gag. Cheers, bud

Do you have any info on Final Fantasy Advent Children? It looks good and I was wondering if it is going to be released to Europe?

Craig, Crewe

It's a DVD-only movie set two years after FF-7. Japanese and American release is this Summer but there's no word yet on European distribution. Cross your fingers or get a multi-region player.

Haven't you thought of changing the Star Letter prize? It's a bit boring. And I'm annoyed that the money off voucher has dropped from £5 to £3.

Matthew, Middlesex

Two problems solved, just like that. See what happens when you write to us?

For PES 4 I reckon Konami should record Trevor Brooking commentating real-life matches and then just edit the tapes together.

Zola, via email

Or they could just get rid of the gobshite altogether...

PSP looks sexier than see-through undies, but can it handle first-person shooters?

CVG STAR LETTER

HOW TO GET AHEAD IN GAMES ADVERTS

I've heard about one of the biggest screw over jobs ever. Apparently the beheadings seen in the Japanese and U.S. versions of Ninja Gaiden will be censored from the European release to stop it from getting an 18 rating. What was going to be one of the must-have games of 2004 has just been potentially ruined for me. Now, I understand that sometimes you have to censor stuff, but the least you could do is release an uncut version of the game so that more mature gamers can enjoy the full gore-fest.

Jamie, via email

CVG More news on this in our Ninja Gaiden feature on page 68, but it's worth pointing out that a Microsoft spokesperson has stated that no changes have been confirmed. Okay, so not being able to chop someone's head off is hardly going to make the game stink, but it is annoying being nannied. We reckon your idea about an uncensored version is brilliant – not only would it be a nice collector's edition, it would also indicate that Microsoft respects the maturity of adult gamers. And let's face it, an 18 certificate never did GTA any harm, eh?

cex
WINNER
Star Letter-writers win £150 to spend at CeX. CeX is the place to trade in your old games, DVDs and consoles for new, or sell them for unbeatable cash pay-outs. With games starting from £3, the winner could get 50 games!
Visit www.cex.co.uk for more info.

"THERE ARE FEMALE GAMERS IN THE WORLD BUT THEY GO UNNOTICED DUE TO THEIR OVERWHELMING MASCULINITY"

There are lots of us girl gamers out there, silly boys! Don't be fooled by our sweet exteriors – inside we love a bit of blood and gore too. In fact, the more scary and gruesome the game the better I like it! Cant wait for The Suffering and Halo 2, they look really cool. So all you guys out there who think we play just 'girlie' games, be afraid, be very afraid.

Loz, via email

Girl gamers do exist! My cousin loves playing videogames, she was the first person in my family to get the GBA and has PSone, GameCube and Xbox. She loves gory games as well!

Damien, via email

She's got her knockers (arf) but Lara is a lovely role-model for girl gamers. Or at least her baps are

...AND DESTROYED

In answer to last months hot topic 'Girl Gamers: do they exist?', I'll have to say yes... but they aren't girls, more like tomboys! Since the dawn of online gaming it has been very clear that you have to have a very low voice to play games if you're a girl. Many times I have been shocked to realise that while playing SOCOM or Rainbow Six 3 I was talking to females. They sounded like Barry White for Christ sake! I even confronted a 'girl' once on SOCOM. Her online name was 'Im Just A Girl' but she sounded like her balls had dropped down to her shins. There ARE female gamers in the world, but they go unnoticed due to their overwhelming masculinity.

Johno, via email

Girls: Hot gamers or mutt gompers?

CVG Who'd have guessed it. We've been flooded with mail from girl gamers and, since we want to be fair, we've included the views of a rampant misogynist too. Go, fella. Now we know girl gamers DO exist, the next question is... are they hot or man-beasts as Johno says? Photo evidence please of your hot gaming girlfriend/mate. Your efforts'll be rewarded, unless they look like what's on www.sexiestgamer.com. That's just plain wrong.

MAILBOMBS!

Cat got your tongue? Wanna say something but can't think what to talk about? Try these.

Dynamite issues blowing up in our faces:

- NINTENDO: Sleeping giant or dead duck?
- 3D OR NOT 3D: That is the, you know, topic
- GAME CENSORSHIP: Do we need it?
- GIRL GAMERS (AGAIN): Hot or not?
- OUR NEW LOOK: Ya dig it?

EMAIL US AT: MAILBAG.CVG@DENNIS.CO.UK

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG
DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 9 DALLINGTON STREET, LONDON EC1V 0BQ
Hosing all over other mags this month are...

Editor ..... Alex Simmons
Managing Editor ..... Peter Walker
Reviews Editor ..... Lee Skittrell
News Editor ..... Mike Cooper
Staff Writer ..... Graeme Boyd
Art Editor ..... Jaime Smith
Contributing Editor ..... Paul Davies
Art Director ..... Phil Clark
Online News Editor ..... Johnny Minkley
Online Section Editor ..... Steve Colton

CONTRIBUTORS
(Words) Maura Sutton, Matt Wales, Mike Jackson, Steve O'Hagan, Alex The Hutt, Richie Shoemaker, Funky Munky, Will Porter, Paul Prez, Ed Zed
(Subbing) Rosanna Negrotti, Daniel Robson (Design) Torben Krog, Mike Newson, Big John Woolford, Tim MacDonald, Tony Cormack, Jamie Malcolm
(Illustration) Team Artonomy, Joe Roberts, Jamie Malcolm

CVG Editorial ..... 020 7907 6565 (Fax 020 7251 8213)
Subscriber Enquiries ..... 01454 642443 or cvg@cisubs.co.uk
Online Subscriber Service ..... www.subsinfo.co.uk
Production Executive
Stuart Slade 020 7907 6054
Senior Production Executive
Kerry Lambird 020 7907 6056
Group Sales Director
Ian Westwood
Games Group Advertising Manager
Mandy Critchley 020 7907 6670
Marketing Manager
Emily Ford 020 7907 6672
Senior Sales Executive
Jonathan Boakes 020 7907 6673
Senior Sales Executive
Kerry Nortcliffe 020 7907 6671
Classified Sales Executive
Dan Read 020 7907 6684
Group Production Manager
Simon Maggs 020 7907 6051
List Rental Executive
Nerys Church 020 7907 6140
Direct Marketing Director
Julian Thorne
Newstrade Manager
Frzana Rehman 020 7907 6148
Group Publisher
Duncan Tickell 020 7907 6352
Financial Director
Ian Leggett
Group Managing Director
Alistair Ramsay
Chairman
Felix Dennis

Dennis
PPA
Company Registered in England, number 1138891.
Entire contents © 2004 Felden Productions.
© Computer And Video Games 2004
ISBN NO: 0261-3697
Computer And Video Games recognises copyrights and trademarks. We have acknowledged copyright holders. If we have not credited your copyright, we will correct any oversight.

CVG FINDS OUT WHO'S KING OF THE COURT!

CHALLENGE CVG

Grab your balls and make a racket for the first Challenge CVG Top Spin Tennis Tournament!

XBOX LIVE SPECIAL

CHALLENGE RULES

Straight knockout tournament with two semi-finals and a CVG Challenge Championship final. One set, three games. Overall winner nets Xbox, Xbox Live Starter Pack, and Top Spin Tennis! Smashing!

GRAEME 'NEW BALLS' BOYD
CVG'S TENNIS PRO

VS

ADAM 'ACE' BETTERIDGE
WHAT A RACKET

JAMES 'BACKHAND' BAKER
BALLS FLYING EVERYWHERE

JOE 'SMASHER' FIELD
"HOW DO I RUN?"

Joe celebrates the OTHER point he got off Adam. Way to go Joe!

We had to pull Grazza up a couple of times on his flagrant joypad abuse

TEAM CVG VS TWICKENHAM TOP SPINNERS

"I look a bit like the boys from Busted with my sweatbands, eh?" No Graeme, you look a bit like a twat

Tiger Tim? What kind of a nickname is that? It's like calling someone Killer Kevin or Simon the Slaughterer. It doesn't fit, it's oxymoronic, or maybe just moronic. And far be it from us to make jokes about how crap he is at tennis, but, um, he is.

But even Timmy could find himself a fair Top Spin Tennis challenge on Xbox Live, thanks to XSN Sports. At the click of a button you can compare your stats with players around the world to see whether you'll get ground into chalk-dust by them.

Which is handy for our Grazza, considering he's on a particularly heinous CVG Challenge losing streak. When we offered him a chance to thump Adam Betteridge, James Baker and Joe Field, Twickenham's very own tennis pros, he even came dressed in his tennis whites. What a sportsman. Sorry, we mean tool.

A nickname? We like to call him Gopher Graeme. We make him gopher this, and we make him gopher that.

"Please God, let me win at least one Challenge. I promise I'll give up the over-50s grot mags"

FIRST SEMI-FINAL: ADAM VS JOE

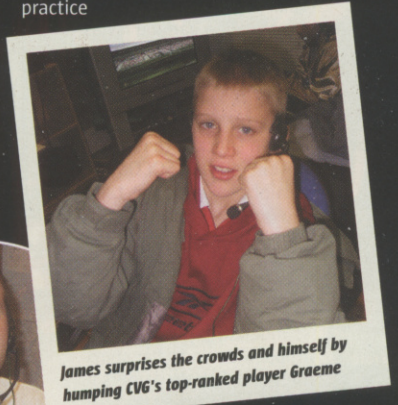
Poor Joe drew the short straw – a first round clash with top seed Adam, who had been impressing the crowds with his virtuoso play in the practice rounds. The match was going to form until the connection 'mysteriously' dropped. "You pulled it 'cos you know I'm gonna hammer you," spat Joe. But once things were back up and running Adam's strong cross-court rockets were tighter than Anna Kournikova's panties and proved too much for Joe to handle – especially when he was asking questions like "How do I run for it?" Erm, push the stick?

■ WINNER: ADAM

SECOND SEMI-FINAL: GRAEME VS JAMES

"Oh yeah, I've got something for you pal, wait until you see the power of my shots," yelped Grazza. While he has been giving his forehand stroke plenty of practice lately his talk amounted to nothing in the first game. Taking serve, though, turned the tide. Three 130mph aces later and James was reeling. With the match tied at one game all Graeme started busting out tricky risk shots – and fluffed each and every one. "You cannot be serious!" he screamed, simultaneously abusing tennis' most overworked cliché and crashing out of his own tournament. Loser.

■ WINNER: JAMES



James surprises the crowds and himself by humping CVG's top-ranked player Graeme

Check out that jacket, eh? Who said gold spandex wasn't a good look?

GRAND FINAL: ADAM VS JAMES

"Don't even care any more, it's all a fix," muttered whine-puss Graeme as he threw off his sodden sweatbands in disgust. Whatever. You suck.

As for the final, it was more of an exhibition on how to totally demolish your opponent with absolutely no thought for their psychological wellbeing. Shot after shot screamed off Adam's racket down the sidelines, leaving James desperately scarpering around the court. Three games to love!

■ CHALLENGE CVG GRAND SLAM WINNER: ADAM

They take home some mega prizes, CVG's Grazza gets his P45. Well, nearly

CHALLENGE CVG WINNER. WINNER: TOP SPINNERS. CHALLENGE CVG WINNER

RESULT CVG LOSE – AGAIN!

Apparently tennis is a gentleman's game. Not at Challenge CVG. "Man, you lot weren't even any competition for me," snorted Adam, "Winning this Xbox was easier than sending John McEnroe into an insane tennis rage."

And win the Xbox he did, as well as Top Spin and a Live Starter Pack. Even Joe and James got a copy of Top Spin and a Live Starter Pack. Grazza got what he deserved – sod all with a free kick up the arse.

So as our Challenge CVG Xbox Live Specials draw to a close the score stands at 0 to Graeme and 3 to you, the CVG readers. But don't stop there! Hammer the miserable Scot some more until he breaks down and weeps like a small child! We're thinking up loads of exciting new ways for you to come and kick our asses at games, so don't miss out - fill out the form, get your parent or guardian to sign it, and send it in real proper quick!

BIGGER, BAD-ASSED, BETTER! CHALLENGE CVG GOES LARGE!

REMEMBER YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT!

CVG has hooked up with Microsoft for the last three issues for some special Xbox Live Challenges, but it's all change again next month. We're cookin' up something new and super special on all formats for you lot to flex your gaming muscles against the might of CVG and the chance to bag a bunch off cool prizes. Want some of that? Then sign up below...

★HELLO, MY NAME IS: ..... [nickname] ..... [age]

★BUT YOU MUST CALL ME ..... ★AND I'M ..... [game name]

★I AM THE BEST AT: .....

★MY ADDRESS IS: .....

★DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: ..... ★EVENING TELEPHONE NO: .....

★EMAIL: .....

Send to: CVG Reader Challenge, CVG magazine, Dennis Publishing, 9 Dallington Street. London, EC1v 0BQ

Out 12th April

Out 31st May

DVD SPECIAL FEATURES including:

- Introductions with producer Boyd Kirkland, Executive Editor Greg Johnson and Directors
- Featurettes: Tales Of The X Men and The X Men Unmasked

Xperience the Xcitement

The final two volumes in Series 1: Out on DVD VIDEO

Available at MVC

pay less discover more

stores nationwide www.mvc.co.uk

If you like the X Men you'll love JUSTICE LEAGUE SECRET ORIGINS.. OUT NOW on DVD VIDEO

© 2004 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved X-Men and all related characters, names and indicia are trademarks of Marvel Comics, Inc. © 2001

There's loads of pedestrian traffic and multi-motor crashes will cost you a lot of time

- PUBLISHER ATARI
- DEVELOPER REFLECTIONS
- OUT: JUNE 1

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Full hands-on with the hottest chase game ever. Three huge cities, 70 vehicles to rag around them, nine weapons to pepper them with bulletholes and a cast of Hollywood cool dudes holding it all together.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

ALSO ON

PS2, PC

WWW.DRIV3R.COM

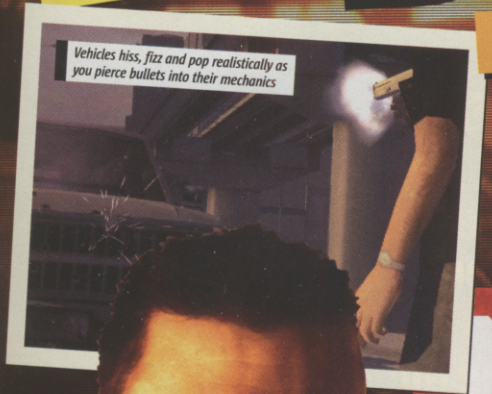
UPDATE

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

WORLD EXCLUSIVE DRIVE-BY!

Driv3r

Deep undercover with the hottest motor on the streets! World exclusive joyride of the Xbox version!



Vehicles hiss, fizz and pop realistically as you pierce bullets into their mechanics

Let's cut the crap. Driv3r is not as good as Vice City. But then it's not even trying to be GTA. It's all about the driving, and in that department it leaves Rockstar's genius gangsta 'em up idling at the curbside. We shit you not.

How are we so sure? Because we've gone deeper undercover with Tanner than ANY OTHER MAG IN THE WORLD. We've played more missions than anyone else, and we've got the drop on more of the hottest Driv3r information than anyone else. Check out our shakedowns of the games hottest missions, but be warned: there are some big-ass spoilers in there.

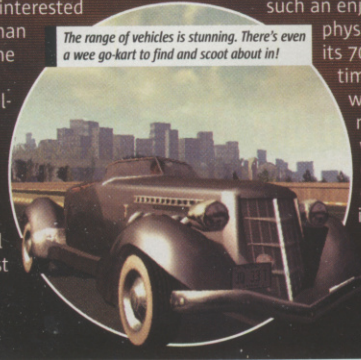
So if you were only interested in whether it's better than GTA, get your ass out the car – if not, buckle up and prepare for a wheel-screaming powerslide of a ride.

ACE OF CHASE

Car chases. That's what Driv3r is all about. Every last ball bearing in Driv3r is greased to provide the most exhilarating pursuit imaginable. Screaming through oncoming traffic at 120 mph in a Ford Mustang-a-like with more bite than a pitbull and a slidier arse than a greased-up Kylie Minogue has never had this kind of movie-ish thrill. It's like feeling the adrenaline of watching a cracking car chase, then being dumped behind the wheel with your foot pressed hard to the floor. Pure rush.

Stiltsville is a real location in Miami's Biscayne Bay. Vice City had its own version

And it's not just car chases – Driv3r uses such an enjoyably believable physics engine for each of its 70 vehicles that every time you get behind the wheel (or handlebars – motorbikes make a welcome two-wheeled debut) you're guaranteed to whoop it up. Imagine a handling system half-way between GTA's arcade-light



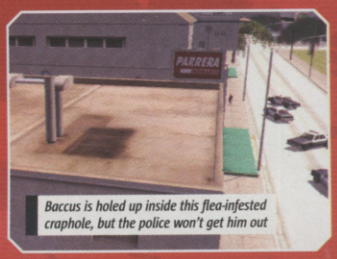
The range of vehicles is stunning. There's even a wee go-kart to find and scoot about in!

MIAMI APPORTIONED

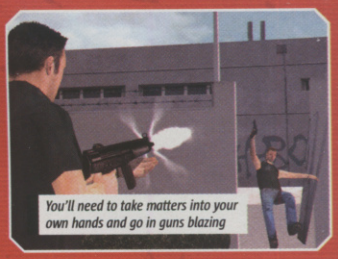
THE SIEGE

You're outside a scuzzy motel where Baccus, a car thief with links to the gang you're casing, is holed up. It's is a full-on siege, but you're not waiting around for some punk to wave the white flag.

You head around to the tradesman's entrance. Baccus leaps into his car and speeds off, leaving you with one option – jump into a motor and get after him!



Baccus is holed up inside this flea-infested craphole, but the police won't get him out



You'll need to take matters into your own hands and go in guns blazing

When we played this mission goons' AI was weak. Needs tightening up please

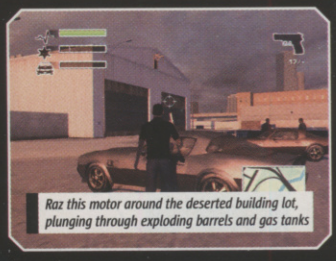
MIAMI APPORTIONED

IMPRESS LOMAZ

You need a way into the gang. Impressing Lomaz might just do it. Show him your driving skills AND your contempt for his rival's property by ramming through it.

He'll give you a lend of his meaty muscle motor, so floor it through the dude's building yard and do your own DIY destruction job, then head over to the hapless hoodlum's bar. Shoot it up real nice before the po-po appear. That'll show 'em you mean business.

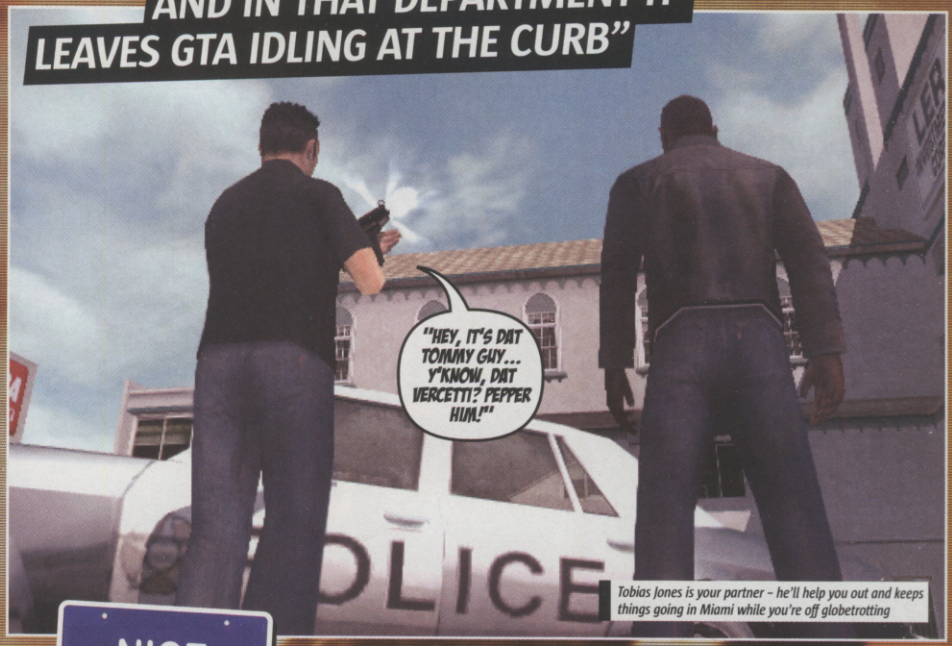
Start by taking your own speedboat over to the rendezvous point



Raz this motor around the deserted building lot, plunging through exploding barrels and gas tanks

Using the film editor to create montages of your favourite crashes is a nice addition

"DRIV3R IS ALL ABOUT THE DRIVING, AND IN THAT DEPARTMENT IT LEAVES GTA IDLING AT THE CURB"



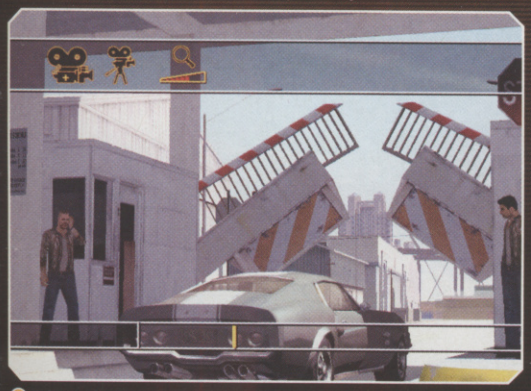
Tobias Jones is your partner – he'll help you out and keeps things going in Miami while you're off globetrotting

MIAMI
APPORTIONED

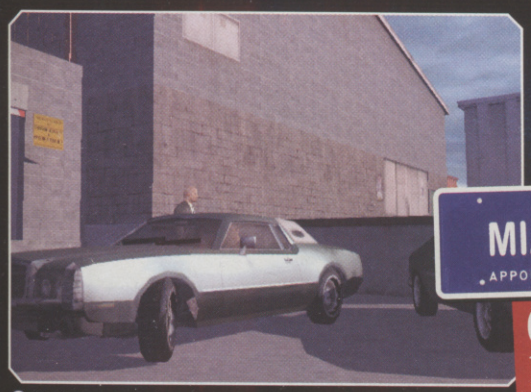
DODGE ISLAND

You're in the gang now, and you've just paid a suitcase of greens to rival gang boss The Gator for a stolen car. It's a set-up! His goons are waiting for you, and they're packing automatic rifles and bad attitudes.

Get in the car. Don't think. Drive. There's a plate glass window at the end of the warehouse. Floor it, feel the torque melt your bones, and if you're lucky you might just make the leap to safety...

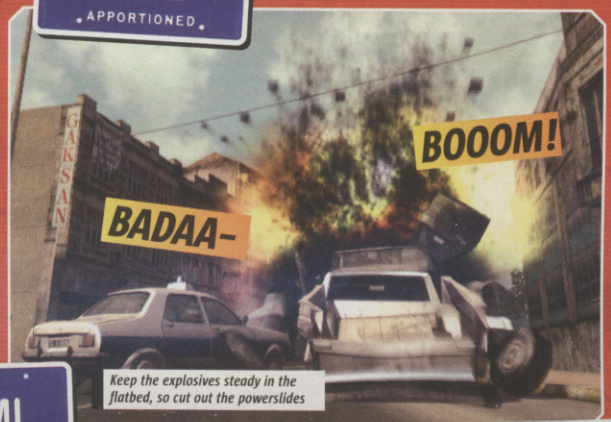


Driv3r's plot is riddled with double crosses and betrayals like this



Watch for goons: they try to shoot your tyres out before the big jump

NICE
APPORTIONED



Keep the explosives steady in the flatbed, so cut out the powerslides

ARMS DEALER

Your gang has stolen all the cars they need in Miami and the action moves on to Nice. You've got to pick up a crate of explosives for a demolition job.

Take out the goons guarding it, climb behind the wheel, and roll out quick. You're getting chased but any sharp turn will smash the crate and risk a deadly explosion! So take it nice and easy...

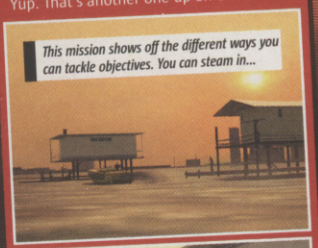
Here's that vehicle damage we told you about. Unfortunately it's our car. Arse

MIAMI
APPORTIONED

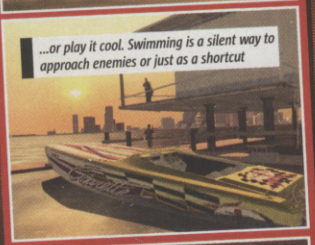
GATOR'S YACHT

The slimy bastard's double-crossed you and now it's time for revenge. He's got a huge yacht at anchor in the Bay – blowing that up would be like cutting off his nob and feeding it to him.

You've gotta fight past his guys to get the boomsticks, or why not swim up to the yacht to keep things quiet. Swim? Yup. That's another one up on GTA...



This mission shows off the different ways you can tackle objectives. You can steam in...



...or play it cool. Swimming is a silent way to approach enemies or just as a shortcut

But when you're packing heat it's much more fun to take on the goons toe-to-toe

steering and Project Gotham 2's exaggerated oversteer and you're pretty close. Slamming the accelerator doesn't just shoot you forward, it spins the back wheels frantically, losing traction if you don't balance it properly. Of course, master your timing and strength on the pedal and you can abuse this power-charged loss of control to chew up the road with tarmac splitting powerslides.

CRASH STASH

There genuinely is no sweeter feeling than mashing the handbrake and flipping your motor towards a side-street, keeping her sideways as your front bumper kisses the oncoming traffic and the pursuing cop car says hello to a lampost.

You'll need to judge your moves perfectly, though. The suspension in every vehicle is accurately modelled, so kerbs and changes in the camber of the road will cause your wheels to squirm in a horrifyingly realistic manner. Crashes aren't little dinks: they're scary, tooth-lodged-in-the-windscreen wallops that'll give you whiplash if you're not strapped into your sofa. And the cars feel it, too. Every last cubic millimetre of your motor will buckle and shatter, and real pile-ups result in an orgy of automotive carnage littering the streets like refugees from the junkyard. Sometimes cars will literally be ripped into mere chunks of metal.

Speaking of stuff littering the street, why bother breaking your driving line when you can plough straight through the stuff? Impressive physics govern every piece of dropped bumper or popped-off tyre, so hit it and you'll rumble over it convincingly and send it flying. That goes for street furniture too – hit a bench, fence or bunch of crates and they'll splinter into a million pieces, resulting in some wicked movie-style mayhem. And, yes, you can finally hit pedestrians in a Driver game, sending their squishy bodies flailing onto the tarmac..

MOTOR HEAVEN

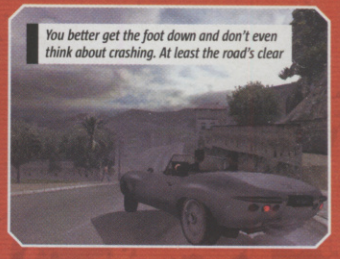
There's loads of things to ram your car through, and loads of cars to try out. Each one handles uniquely and realistically for it's kerb-weight and power – escaping the fuzz in a super-charged Italian sports car that's glued to the road is easy, but why not try it in a clapped-out little hatchback? Or an 18-wheel articulated truck with a trailer that can be detached

NICE
APPORTIONED

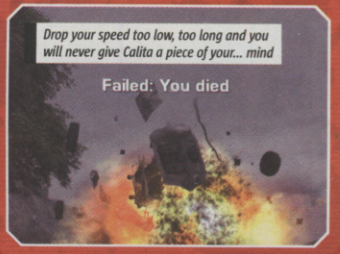
SPEED

Later on, your sassy boss Calita is testing your ability to go at it hard and steady – she's rigged your car to blow! Drop under 40mph and a bomb activates.

Don't panic though, you've got a long way to go across town before you can dump the motor, so there's plenty of time to keep your speed up and plan your escape...



You better get the foot down and don't even think about crashing. At least the road's clear



Drop your speed too low, too long and you will never give Calita a piece of your... mind

"ALMOST ALL OF DRIV3R'S MISSIONS REQUIRE YOU TO BE ON TOP OF YOUR GAME FROM THE GET-GO"

Police AI isn't perfect yet but they'll sure give you a hell of a chase. Watch out for them fish-tailing your motor and make sure to keep your eyes peeled for roadblocks

Outrunning the cops or rival gangs on Nice's twisty mountain streets is a hell of a rush

MOUNTAIN CHASE

The gang needs one last motor in Nice. There's a truck en-route to pick it up from a rival gang's yard.

You could follow the truck all the way there and rely on your bullet-spitting pal to sort out the welcoming committee, or you could hijack the truck before it gets close to the pick-up point and nick the motor from right underneath their noses...

For the ultimate rush ride a bike in first-person mode. In fact, all the driving feels great like this

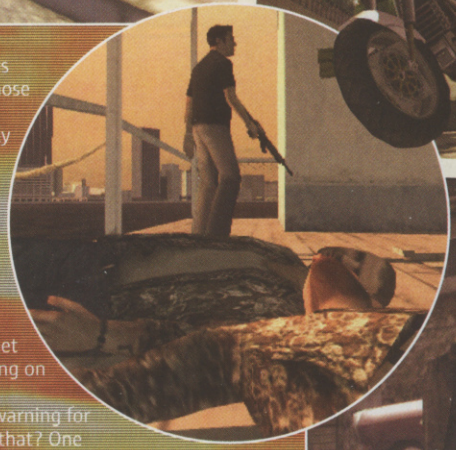
at high speeds like a guided missile? Or a scooter? Or a fork-lift truck? In fact, you've got a distinct advantage in one of these little bad boys: scoop the rozzers up on your forks and flip them over!

SKIDDING OUT

So for sheer tyre-to-tarmac driving thrills, Driv3r leaves skidmarks all over GTA. Still, it's round about here that things start to get a little worrying. Driv3r isn't a free-roaming game. The series never has been, and Reflections has resisted the urge to go all GTA . If you want to tour about, you need to abandon Undercover mode for Free Ride – which comes as a bit of a jolt after the total immersion of Vice City's urban playground. Not that there's much to do in Free Ride except find shortcuts, a handful of hidden cars and mini-games.

The main Undercover mode is resolutely mission-based, and those missions are resolutely story-based. And that's fine, principally because a lot of time and money has gone into ensuring the storyline drips with high production values like it's been standing under a money power-shower. There's no doubt that it looks cool and the all-star vocal talent helps establish an edgy Hollywood feel, but you never get the sense that there's much going on outside of the plot.

We've got another word of warning for you too: Stuntman. Remember that? One little mistake and it's restart,



Driv3r's more mature, po-faced tone. A sense of humour would be nice

You can jack any other car at any time during the game, but you'll need to stay in certain vehicles to complete missions

restart, restart. Almost all of Driv3r's missions, in one way or another, require you to be on top of your game from the moment you turn the ignition key. Nut up for just a split-second too long and it's mission failed. Restart.

We're not scared of difficult games. We don't mind being expected to produce the goods consistently in order to succeed. But we do mind having to restart a mission every time we clip a lamppost until we're ready to fracture our own skull with the joypad to numb the intense, frustrating PAIN, damn it.

Of course, in a masochistic crocodile-clips-on-the-nipples kinda way we like it, and we liked it in Stuntman too. The feeling of finally beating the mission just about makes up for all the anger, swearing and burst blood vessels. Compare this with GTA, which was such a friendly playing experience – if you couldn't get past a mission you could shake its hand, tell it "Thanks mate, but I can't be arsed with you right now," and bugger off on your PC to blow up old women and snipe seagulls.

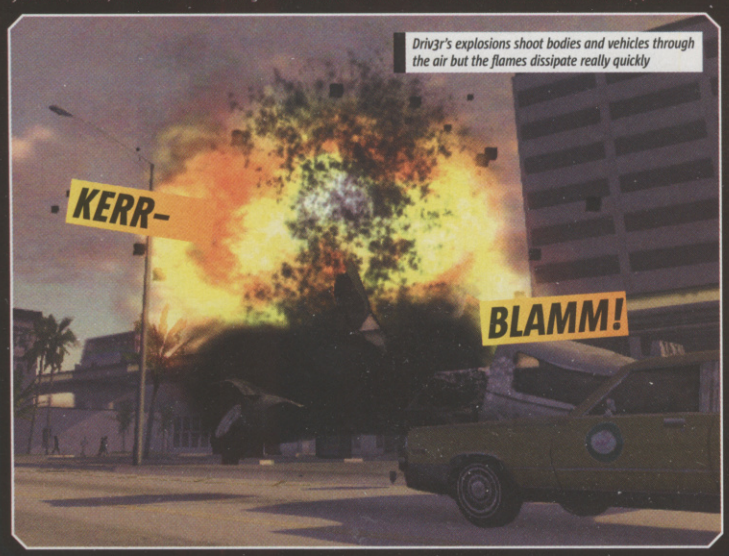
KNOCKED DOWN

Then there's the out-of-car stuff. The game has to be ready in a matter of weeks and the on-foot stuff we've played still seems a long way from completion. Somebody better get their finger out of their arse pretty quick. We can forgive the broken enemy AI and the fact that Tanner moves like a geriatric in slo-mo, but we are

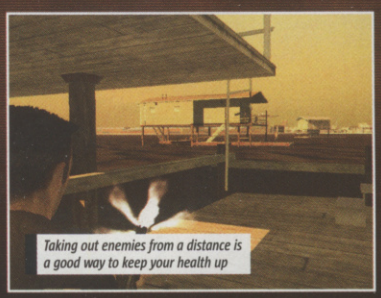
BOMB TRUCK

On to Istanbul and the net's closing in around you. You need to stop that truck up ahead, but some bastard in the back's lobbing barrels of explosive at you!

Jones is riding shotgun, so drive carefully, get him close enough, and riddle the bugger with bullets (you can only drive and shoot when you have a pal in the car). Watch it though – explosions will knock you off course, but a direct hit will give the local architecture a fresh coat of undercover cop paint.



Driv3r's explosions shoot bodies and vehicles through the air but the flames dissipate really quickly



Taking out enemies from a distance is a good way to keep your health up

Every car handles different but most have one thing in common – a really slidey arse-end

You can really feel the momentum swinging around behind you in the fat-ass bigger motors

ISTANBUL
APPORTIONED

TURKISH HEAT

You've been framed for the murder of your Turkish Police contact, the cops are after you and they're real pissed off.

Jones is driving, you're in the back of the truck with your machine-gun, and the cops are trying to ram the shit out of you. Slow them down with a hail of bullets and watch as you slowly reduce their motors to chaff.

FRENCH TAXIS SUCK... THEY DON'T COME WITH A DRIVER

SHADY!

You'll hang around with all sorts of bad mofos like this when you're an undercover cop

You definitely won't be able to pick up passengers in a taxi or do any other GTA-style sub-missions either

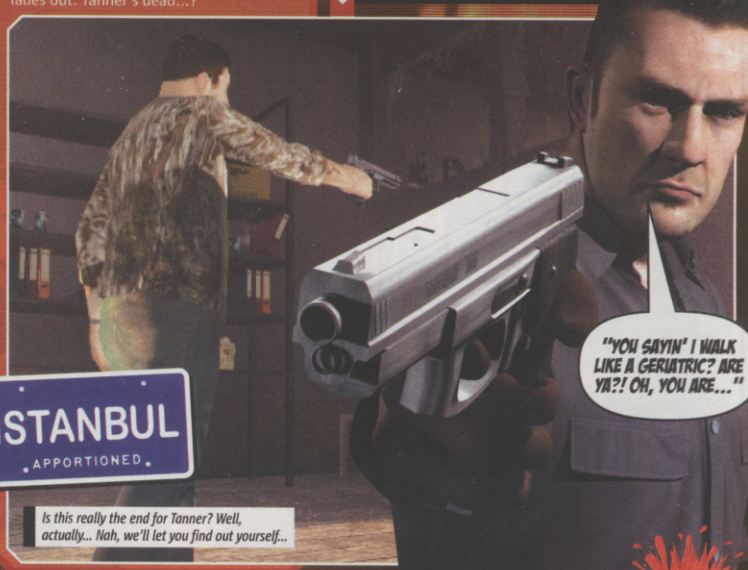
The bullet damage on vehicles rules. It's ace seeing bullet holes appear in bodywork like rusty zits

THE END...?

Istanbul in the midday sun, and it's all about to go down. Jericho, hardcore international hitman and your enemy in Driver 2, is facing off with the police, emptying his twin sawn-off shotguns into soft copper flesh.

You ready your pistol, take a deep breath, and dive from your cover, heading straight for Jericho. Bang. Sunlight stings your eyes. Then blackness.

You're prostrate on a gurney in an Istanbul hospital. The heart rate monitor beeps, beeps, then flatlines. The camera fades out. Tanner's dead...?



ISTANBUL
APPORTIONED

Is this really the end for Tanner? Well, actually... Nah, we'll let you find out yourself...

genuinely worried that when his soles hit the sidewalk his controls feel, well... a bit wrong. You can play in first or third-person mode, but either way every movement is too slow and imprecise to do anything other than shoot blindly in the general direction of your enemies.

It's aiming for a more realistic feel than GTA's slapstick violence, but at the moment it's just not that much fun. Perhaps Reflections recognises this – last time we heard the balance of in-car to out-of-car action was 70%-30%; now we're told it's closer to 80%-20%. Why's that then? And considering Driver 2 was let down by poor out-of-car stuff, we hope Driv3r doesn't shoot itself in the foot in the same way.

And the film editing stuff? It's cool, but to be honest we're finding it hard to get all that excited about it. There are definitely people (like crazy CVG film-nut Mike) who'll spend hours mucking about with it, but we'd rather spend our time ACTUALLY razzing around, not watching a replay of it.

CRUNCH!

GETTING TYRED

These are problems that we fear are in danger of reducing this growling beast packed with horsepower into a backfiring let-down. Sure, there's not much to beat the sheer rush of flooring a super-charged motor across a huge, beautifully recreated cityscape, but it gets old pretty quick when you're forced to replay the same mission till you puke. Add that frustration to the sub-GTA out-of-car stuff and Driv3r could blow it's chance to take over the crim-game underworld.

Overall, it's not looking likely to be as accomplished and complete an experience as GTA. But what's almost as important is that Driv3r has the potential to create the most vivid, action-packed and satisfying car chases EVER in a game. We just hope the wheels don't blow out at 120mph.

Driving into the scenery often causes brilliantly over-the-top damage, with splinters flying everywhere

THE VERDICT

HAS TANNER'S COVER BEEN BLOWN APART?

ALEX

Grittier and visually more realistic than GTA, Driv3r has more in common with The Getaway than Vice City. You're not given as much freedom and the missions aren't as varied, but then that's not what Driver does. It's all about driving – fast – and it doesn't get much better than this.

PETE

The driving physics are tighter than a duck's ass, the carnage you can create by smashing up the scenery rules, and I've never seen such cool damage caused by explosions – meaty chunks of car fly everywhere! Other than that it's not too different to the last two games, and that could be Driv3r's problem.

LEE

I love the real world levels and the fact you can maraud around in first-person totally sucks you into the action from the off. It's still too easy to fall into the water when nicking speedboats, but at least Tanner can swim! The movie editor mode should be da bomb too.

GRAEME

I bought a PlayStation just to play the first Driver and I've been desperate to get my hands on this. The driving remains the most tyre-shredding excitement you can have on console, but I just wish more new features had been added. It's the same old Driver, and that's both a brilliant and a bad thing.

MIKE

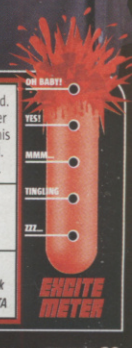
I can't knock the spot-on handling or the visuals, 'cos it's mighty purdy. But I knew that Reflections wouldn't cock that up. It's the free-ride stuff and missions that I'm worried about. Dry and soulless are the first words that come to mind.

CVG OPINION

Truth? We're not convinced. The driving kicks ass harder than any other game of this type but the on-foot side HAS to get sorted. Glad you're back Tanner. Don't let us down.

WE LOVE
- Fast and furious car chases
- Dashboard-slamming crashes
- Well-presented visual style

WE HATE
- Frustratingly linear missions
- Out-of-car stuff needs a lot of work
- There's not as much to do as in GTA



INCOMING

ACCESS ALL AREAS TO THE FATTEST FORTHCOMING GAMES!

SPRINGIN' INTO SUMMER WITH THE HOTTEST GAMES

Did you feel it? Spring sprung the other day, which means the weather's getting hotter, girls' skirts are getting shorter, and the post-Christmas games drought is over! It's pishing down with hot new games in the CVG office. Check out our hands-on Shell Shock verdict, get the full skinny on Hitman Contracts, take a peek at Resident Evil Outbreak's scabs and get ready for summer footie with our Euro 2004 head-to-head. Hey, just 'cos the sun's out doesn't mean we should stop playing games!

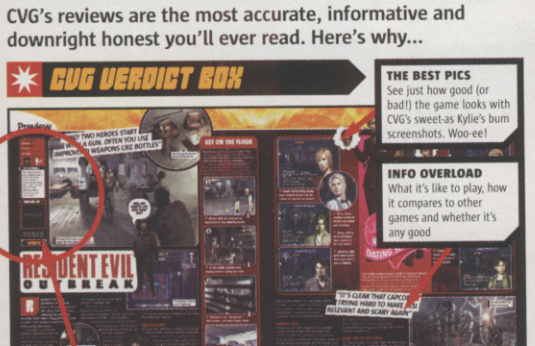
Graeme Boyd

Graeme Boyd *Team CVG*

HOW CVG'S PREVIEWS WORK

CVG's reviews are the most accurate, informative and downright honest you'll ever read. Here's why...

CVG VERDICT BOX



THE BEST PICS
See just how good (or bad!) the game looks with CVG's sweet-as Kylie's bum screenshots. Woo-ee!

INFO OVERLOAD
What it's like to play, how it compares to other games and whether it's any good

ONLINE GAMING
Can you play the game online, against other gamers around the globe? Find out here

RELEASE DATE, PUBLISHER AND DEVELOPER
When it's due out, and who's making it.

PLAYERS
How many people can play. If it's anything from one to 32, we'll put 32!

CVG OPINION
What we thought of the game, no matter what stage of development the game is at

WE LOVE
The good things we like about the game so far

WE HATE
The things we'd really like the developers to avoid including in the final game

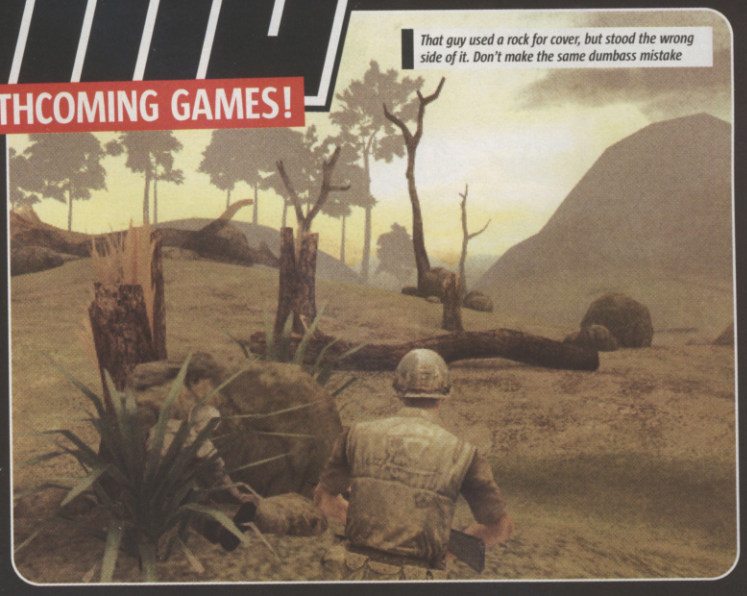
FORMAT
The console we played the game on is highlighted red, but other formats it's coming out on are listed too!

WEBSITE
Want more info, more screens and to see it in action? Visit this URL!

IN A NUTSHELL
A brief summary of what the game is like. If it's an update and CVG has already previewed it we'll also sum up stuff we've said before.

WHAT THE EXCITE METER™ MEANS

You can tell how excited CVG's experts are about the game being previewed simply by looking at the Excite Meter! Easy, huh?



That guy used a rock for cover, but stood the wrong side of it. Don't make the same dumbass mistake

- PUBLISHER EIDOS
- DEVELOPER GUERRILLA
- OUT: JUNE

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL
The makers of Killzone go gung-ho in Vietnam, in a third-person shooter that depicts war in all its bloody, gritty horror. And if you can stomach the gore, it's not long till you lose it to a Viet Cong booby-trap...

AVAILABLE ON
PS2

ALSO ON
XBOX

WWW.SHELLSHOCKGAME.COM

SHELLSHOCK

CVG EXCLUSIVE NEW SCREENS!

NAM '67

They're everywhere. You can hear them moving in the bushes to the front and behind, and to either side. Surrounded. And while you can't actually see the Viet Cong closing in on your skinny American ass, their cries of "You goin' hom' in a body bag, Gee-aaai!" are enough to make any battle-hardened grunt fill his fatigues.

This tense waiting game is just the calm before the storm, and if Guerrilla's reputation is anything to go by, it's gonna be one hell of a downpour. See, Guerrilla's other game Killzone is an adrenaline-fuelled shooter that never shifts out of overdrive, and Shell Shock is just as intense.

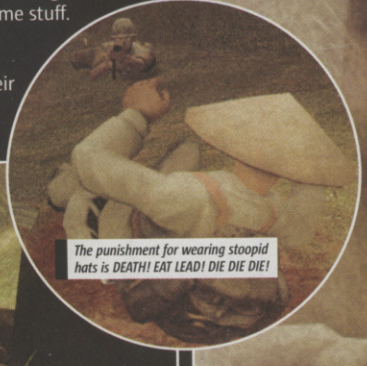
As soon as the first VC ducks out of cover, bullets start cracking through the air and blood paints the jungle red. But you're not just fighting one guy at a time. Not even two, three or four. You're literally smothered by enemies attacking from every direction with you stuck in the middle. Maybe they were right about the body bag...

HORRORS OF WAR

How many war films have you seen where some square-jawed Yank is the hero and the only horror he faces is dirt getting under his nails out in the field? Well, Shell Shock is different. It too claims to depict the horrors or war, but here we're talking proper, gruesome stuff. Seeing your comrades hanging by their necks, blood dripping from their feet will turn your stomach. You'll hear screams as you infiltrate a POW camp, only to find a fellow GI who's been hooked up to electrodes and fried alive. In fact pretty much everything that makes war 'bad' is in Shell Shock – severed limbs, head-popping, people literally spilling their guts on the floor... and much, much more. It's nasty stuff, but it makes for one hell of a game.

BOOBY-TRAPPED!

You'll first experience the game's shock factor during the opening level, in which you and your pals are ordered to clear an area that



The punishment for wearing stoopid hats is DEATH! EAT LEAD! DIE DIE DIE!

Find one of these puppies and you're laughing. Do the Viet Conga, suckers!

Ammo is always in short supply, so you've

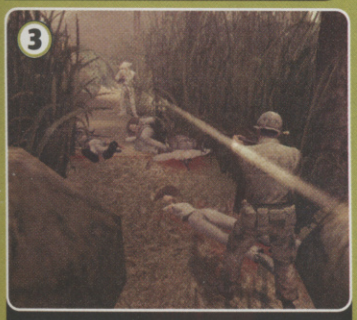
STEADY AS SHE GOES

It looks easy in the movies, but firing accurately while running along is harder than tapping your head and rubbing your belly at the same time.

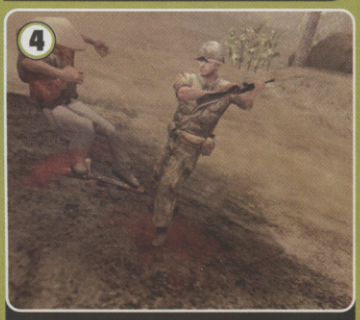
And while it looks cool, legging it through the bush as ammo cases rain from your M-16, you'll hit bugger all. Take it slow then, and make sure you look along the barrel of your gun.

Running around shooting looks cool, but it's only really accurate up close

Looking over your GI's shoulder increases accuracy but cuts manoeuvrability...



...which means you're more likely to take a slug in the face



And if all else fails, break their noses with the butt of your gun. Nice

will later be used as base camp. Sounds easy enough, especially since intel claims enemy resistance is minimal. But what they forgot to tell you is the place is riddled with booby-traps. One wrong step and you'll trigger a trap which punctures your chest with razor-sharp spikes, or sets off a mine that rips your legs from your body. There are others, too, like giant logs that crush ribcages as they swing through the air. To say these traps are gruesome is an understatement, and unless you're looking to return home in a wooden box, you'd best take things very slowly.

What's clever about the traps is the way you must deactivate them – simply avoiding them isn't good enough, because they'll only catch out some

The M-16 is great for up-close assaults, but loses accuracy over distance. Use a sniper rifle instead

The jungles really are dense so you won't spot enemies until they're right on top of you

The Viet Cong hide out in fox holes, waiting for your head to pop into view before they fire. Use grenades to flush 'em out

"PUMP SHELLS INTO THE VIET CONG, THEN NICK THE WEAPONS OFF THEIR BULLET-RIDDEN CORPSES!"

look-out for new weapons all the time. Corpses are your best bet

BLOODBATH!

Shell Shock is nasty. You're dumped on the front lines with a bunch of other GI recruits, and over time you bond with your pals and begin to rely on them.

Then they're shot in the face, fried alive, punctured with sharp sticks and hung by their necks. This ain't like any other war game you've played.

Check out the screens below to see if your got the guts to stomach this massacre.

You were chatting to that guy in the mess tent just a couple of hours ago. Erk

Johns never did master the art of shaving with a cutthroat razor

Synchronised bungie jumping went down a storm in Saigon

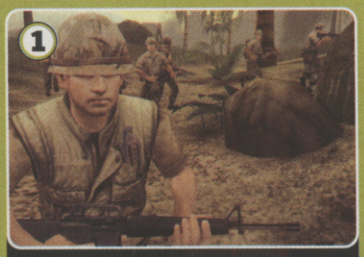
You reach this guy just as he draws his last breath. Still, least you can nick his gun

Ka-blam! You want blood? You got it, and lots of it. Shell Shock's bound to get an 18 rating

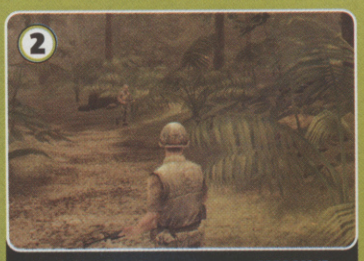
GOING AWOL

You're joined by a handful of team-mates during each mission, but rather than listening to your commands, they kinda do their own thing.

That's great if you favour fighting alone, but not so hot if you want someone to cover your ass.



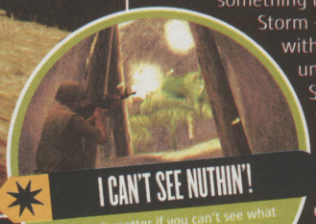
Hey hey, here are the boys! Ready to kick Viet Cong ass, men?



"Er, hello? You there - cover me. GODDAM IT I SAID COVER ME!"

Viet Cong officers look like your team-mates, so make sure you check before firing

"EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK IS BLOOD, GUTS AND A WHOLE LOAD OF ENEMIES"



I CAN'T SEE NUTHIN'!

It doesn't matter if you can't see what you're shooting at, just fire wildly into the bushes and you're bound to bag a couple of VCs!

poor sucker who's walking behind you. Each trap has its own specific way of being disarmed, by tapping out a button combo on the pad. Some are easy so the risk is minimal, but others require more skill. And if you get it wrong, kiss goodbye to your intestines.

DRUGS 'N' HOOKERS

Once base camp is set up, it acts as the hub level where you can save games and view mission briefings. It also serves as a black market to flog weapons you've picked up off enemy corpses, buy drugs that enhance your stamina and even grab a hooker for a bit of fun. Why? We don't know, but these girls are game for anything.

The base camp also has other, more serious uses, such as the rifle range. Here you can try out any of Shell Shock's 30-odd weapons. M-16s and Colt pistols are standard issue for any recruit, but you also get to play around with heavy machine-guns, grenade-launchers, sniper rifles, flame-throwers... Serious hardware.

There are also frag grenades, smoke grenades and countless different types of explosives to master, plus tripod-mounted cannons that can tear through flesh like a hot knife through butter.

But it's only out on the battlefield that you really feel the destruction all these hand-cannons can produce.

We were expecting Shell Shock to play something like Conflict: Desert Storm - action-packed, but with strong tactical undertones. However, Shell Shock trades in team management and tactics for full-on firefights. Sure, you're joined by other American GIs in each mission, but you don't have to give them orders or worry about keeping them alive. They fend for themselves and provide back-up, but it very much feels like you're on your own. Likewise, creeping through the jungle is pointless because, in time, you'll be spotted. And when you are you're surrounded in seconds.

DON'T THINK, SHOOT

All-out attack is the best method of survival then, using trees, rocks and even dead bodies for cover. And while barely a second goes by when your finger isn't tugging on the trigger of your M-16, targeted, controlled bursts are much more effective. Problem is, it isn't all that easy being precise when the game is viewed from third-person, Splinter Cell-style.

Lucky, then, you can aim more carefully, by pressing the right analog down so the camera switches to look over your shoulder and through the gunsights. You can't move as freely or quickly this way, but it's much more accurate and therefore easier to pick off enemies with two or three rounds, rather than wasting an entire ammo clip.

FROM ROOKIE TO RAMBO

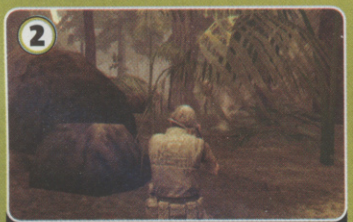
Objectives vary dramatically from one mission to the next, starting off simple and getting progressively more challenging and diverse. Shell Shock is very much story-driven, following the plight of a single GI who starts as a recruit and eventually makes it as a Black Ops elite.

So expect to be cannon fodder for the first few levels, but progressing onto more complicated missions which you tackle alone, like silently infiltrating enemy lines to rescue POWs. And while Shell Shock's GI is unlikely to challenge Sam Fisher for the covert ops crown, he sure as hell could shoot the crap out of him. ✷

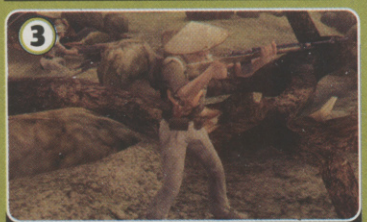
MAKE YOUR MARK, SOLDIER!

Starting as a recruit who's never seen battle before, you've got to earn your stripes out on the battlefield before you can tackle some of Shell Shock's cool Black Ops missions. That means dishing out pain in the battlefield, and taking a few slugs too...

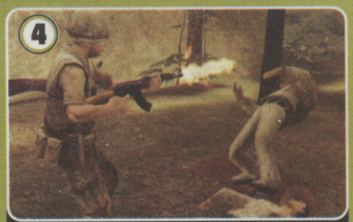
Dropped off by the Chinook, it's up to you and the boys to clear the area



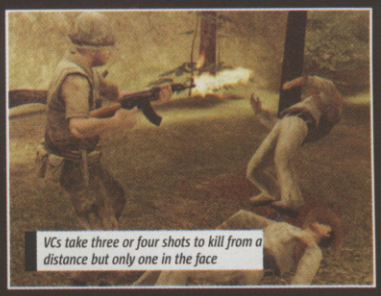
Walking carefully through the dense forest, you spot your first kill. Ker-rack!



But as soon as the bullet rings out, Viet Cong start appearing from every direction!



It's a bloodbath, and this is only the second mission. Hope you're not squeamish, GI



VCs take three or four shots to kill from a distance but only one in the face

UNDER ATTACK!

A year ago you'd be lucky to find a Vietnam game. Now there are loads of the buggers! So if you fancy popping heads in Shell Shock, chances are you'll dig this lot too.

BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM
Sprawling online war monster where you drive tanks, fly planes, pilot choppers... Bring it on!

CONFLICT VIETNAM
Like Conflict Desert Storm but with trees instead of sand. Out later this year on Ps2 and Xbox

MEN OF VALOR
The masterminds behind MOH try their hand at Vietnam. It'll be a lot more... green

VIET KONGA
Donkey Konga goes bongo-crazy in the jungle. Man, you should see those skinny GIs move!

CVG OPINION Disturbing and gory, Shell Shock's gritty style is matched by the relentless killing this third-person blaster serves up. It's not clever but hey, it is very cool. **Alex**

WE LOVE
- The gore is something else!
- Looks gritty, detailed and realistic
- The action is completely full-on

WE HATE
- The gameplay's a bit... dumb
- No multiplayer game!
- You've got to be 18 to play it

Karaoke Stage

The range of musical genres is impressive, from camper-than-a-tent Grease classics, to pappy American pop punk and gravelly rock like CVG fave Nickelback

Hammer the money section of a song and the crowd will go wild, giving you a Ready Brek glow

- PUBLISHER KONAMI
- DEVELOPER KONAMI BEMANI
- OUT: MAY

ONLINE GAMING | x8

IN A NUTSHELL

Sing 'til your throat stings with Konami's answer to Sony's Singstar. We've crooned along to the American version, which has 32 tracks including Avril Lavigne, REM, Barenaked Ladies and Nickelback.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.KONAMI.COM/KARAOKEREVOLUTION

UPDATE

As chat-up lines go, "Fancy coming back to mine to play my PlayStation?" is about as likely to work as "I'd love to infect you with my rampant genital warts."

But all that is about to change. Stuff like EyeToy and Dancing Stage have opened up games to a whole new knicker-wearing audience. Karaoke Stage is about to blow those knickers clean off.

Because, as we all know, girls love to hear the sound of their own voices, and that's what Karaoke Stage is all about. No confusing controls, no dull menu screens, just you, a microphone and your voice.

The Pop Idol visuals are a bit childish but they do the job and you can dress up your character, not that we're into that...

DON'T BRING IT, SING IT

Not to say that hairy-chested men like us won't like it. Basically, you grab your mic, choose a song, and start wailing. The words scroll along the bottom of the screen and lines show what pitch to hit. It's really easy to follow, although the lyrics are a bit small.

The pitch of your voice is indicated by an arrow. Sing too high and it'll point down, sing too low and it'll point up, and nail the note perfectly and it'll go all green and sparkly like a camp Hulk. This fills up your judgement bar, builds your combo and racks up your score. The environments reflect your performance too. Do well and the crowd goes wild, lightshows flare and fireworks pop, but stink it up and everyone will boo, hiss, and eventually bugger off.

It's genuinely impressive stuff and it's probably a bit more intuitive than Singstar, Sony's karaoke game. The problem is both games expect you to stick rigidly to a preset pitch. You can drop an octave if the song's too high for you, but don't expect to do any Christina Aguilera-style gibber-gabbering.

That said, Karaoke Stage is still genius. The twee Pop Idol visuals and more 'classic' selection of karaoke songs (The Wind Beneath My Wings – aaargh!) might struggle against the cool presentation and original artists in Singstar, but if it encourages girls back to your stinking grothole of a bedroom then we're all for it. ✷

PLOP IDOL

Karaoke Stage is so easy to use that any talentless gimp-monkey can be blazing through a tune within minutes, making it ideal for Pop Idol contestants, the socially retarded, and gurning numpties like the fella pictured to the right (AKA CVG's Grazza).

The UK version will be bundled with a cool Logitech mic (ideal for passing around so everyone can make tits of 'emselves), but it'll work fine just with a PS2 headset too.

Miss your notes and you'll get a lousy rating. The arrow points you to the pitch you need...

...hit it dead on and you develop a grossly exaggerated sense of your own talent! Woo-hoo!

The UK track listing is under wraps but we know Konami's aiming for a 'classic' karaoke selection

Complete the single player mode and you get your name on a blimp! Now THAT's real success for you

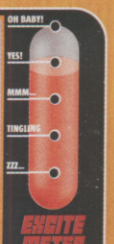
String Good or Great ratings into combos for mega scores. Lucky for this guy, they don't rate your shreds

CVG OPINION

Brilliant technology like a robotic Simon Cowell with smaller man-boobs AND the chance to make a tit of yourself. Fun,but UK track listing will make or break it. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- Singing. Annoying the neighbours
- Listening to people sing
- Laughing at them singing

WE HATE
- Not a huge amount of depth
- Relies on good song variety
- Gives you a right sore jaw



STAR WARS REPUBLIC COMMANDO

PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER
LUCASARTS
RELEASE
NOVEMBER
x16

IN A NUTSHELL

Control a squad of kick-ass Clone troopers as they go behind enemy lines in the fight against Geonosian bugs, Battle Droids and even the new bad guy from Episode III. Battle alongside big hairy Wookiees!

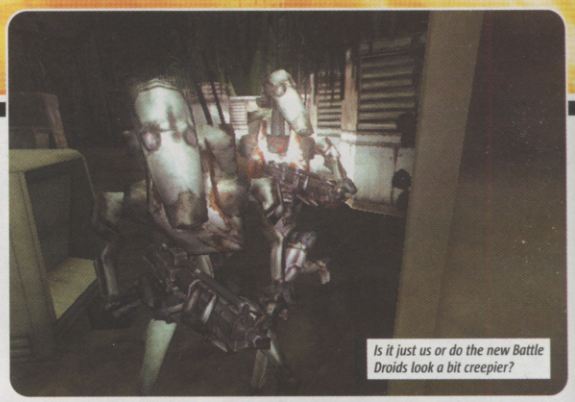
AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

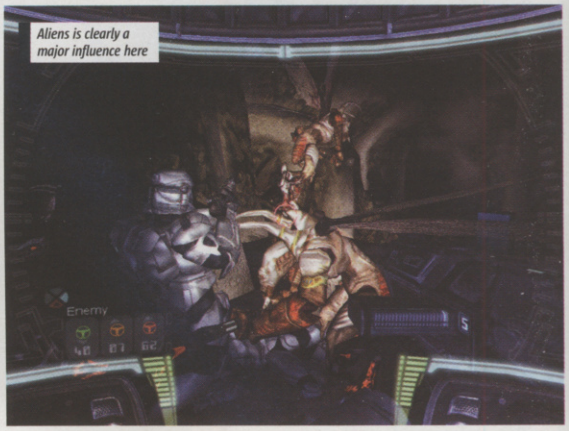
ALSO ON

PC

WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/GAME/SWREPUBLICCOMMANDO

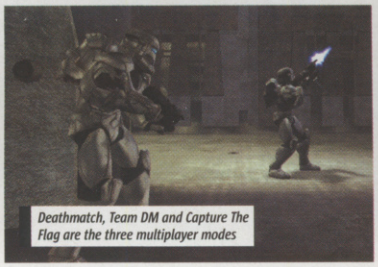


Is it just us or do the new Battle Droids look a bit creepier?



Aliens is clearly a major influence here

Spider Droids are big and heavily armed. You'll need a full-strength squad to take them out



Deathmatch, Team DM and Capture The Flag are the three multiplayer modes

Begun The Clone War has, and coming soon the first Star Wars Episode III game is. Well actually it's more of an interactive teaser for next year's finale, seeing as the game starts as Attack Of The Clones ends, and concludes in a dramatic encounter with General Grievous (he being, if you didn't know already, something of a key player in next year's movie).

Not that we're particularly impressed with meeting the latest Star Wars baddie before the cinema-going masses. What excites us most is that Republic Commando allows us to command and control not just one but four Clone Troopers, all of them specially trained behind-the-lines operatives rather than the blaster fodder we're usually supplied with.

WARS BEASTS APLENTY

What this means is that we'll be sneaking around secret bases, assassinating Separatist leaders, stealing secret plans and rescuing whoever might need rescuing – a young princess, perhaps?

We'll be fighting alongside Wookiee warriors and other Republican do-gooders against all the usual scum and villainy, among them Battle Droids, Trandoshan slavers, Droidekas and even swarms of those creepy Geonosian insect things.

It's clear LucasArts has taken some inspiration from Conflict: Desert Storm when they set about designing Republic Commando. Add in the tension of Aliens, the dark realism of Deux Ex: Invisible War's graphics, the two-gun inventory system of Halo and a first-person look reminiscent of Metroid Prime and you've got yourself an impressive list of quality ingredients. Of course, the intelligence displayed by your allies will be a key factor so it's too early to make a call on how the game will turn out. From what we've seen and played, we're confident that Republic Commando will at last be a prequel game worthy of the Star Wars name. We only hope Episode III itself can claim similar honours. ✷

Your elite Republic Special Ops unit, dressed in their new silvery armour

Wow, nice weapon effects – so good it's blown this guy clean off his feet. Or maybe we just shot him

It's the same graphics engine that powers Deus Ex: Invisible War, so expect some impressive deaths

LucasArts is understandably cagey about unveiling Episode III-specific levels, but the Wookiee homeworld is going to be a central location for both game and film

ONE HUD TO RULE THEM ALL

Republic Commando features a simple interface that allows you to order your squad about simply by pointing at the terrain and hitting the required button. If you've played the recent Rainbow Six adventure on Xbox you'll have some idea what to expect.

You'll be getting mission orders from your commanding officer before each level

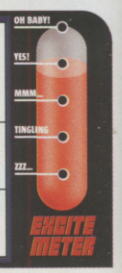
Control your team through the first-person view you big control freak

Use your sniper to take out distant enemy units

CVG OPINION Republic Commando looks set to finally offer up a game dripping with Star Wars authenticity, and an atmosphere and tension all its own. **Richie**

WE LOVE
- The Metroid-style view
- Wookiees to fight alongside
- Dark and creepy levels

WE HATE
- AI might need some more work
- Missions look a bit samey
- Prequel trilogy games suck – so far



- PUBLISHER PANDEMIC STUDIOS
- DEVELOPER LUCASARTS
- OUT: NOVEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Earn money, steal vehicles, shoot people... sound familiar? Now add destructible terrain, weapons of mass destruction and a backdrop of all-out war. Welcome to guns, theft and Armageddon.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX

WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/GAME/MERCENARIES

The explosions are spectacular. If you get too close the shockwave and debris will leave you shellshocked

MERCENARIES

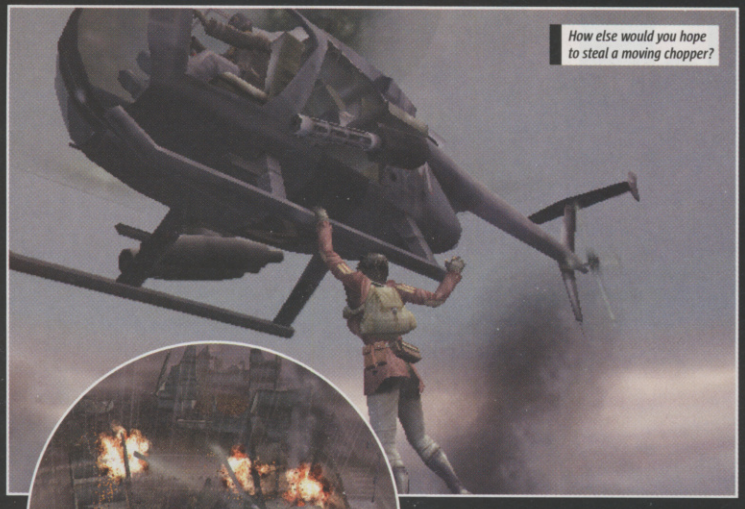
To all intents and purposes Mercenaries is GTA, set not within the climbing cities of '80s America, but across war-torn North Korea. And, as the title suggests, you're not there to keep the peace but to make a big fat stack of stinkin' cash.

Clients include the UN, the Chinese People's Army and the Russian Mafia, all vying for control of the crumbling Communist state. The trouble is, the more you work for one side, the more you may piss off the other.

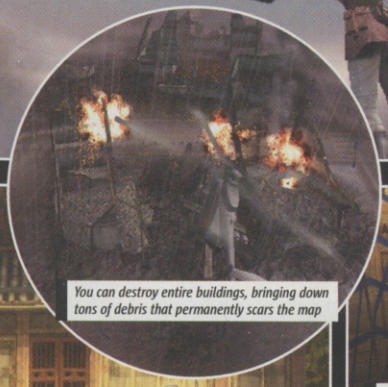
FORGET SAN ANDREAS

As you can expect, a whole slew of vehicles is planned – all of which you can climb aboard to control. They range from jeeps and trucks all the way up to tanks and assault helicopters, and as was the case with GTA, all are simple to control. You can even signal for allied troops to climb aboard and man the weapons whilst you drive. Or of course you can just roam around on foot, with up to a dozen weapons strapped across your back instead.

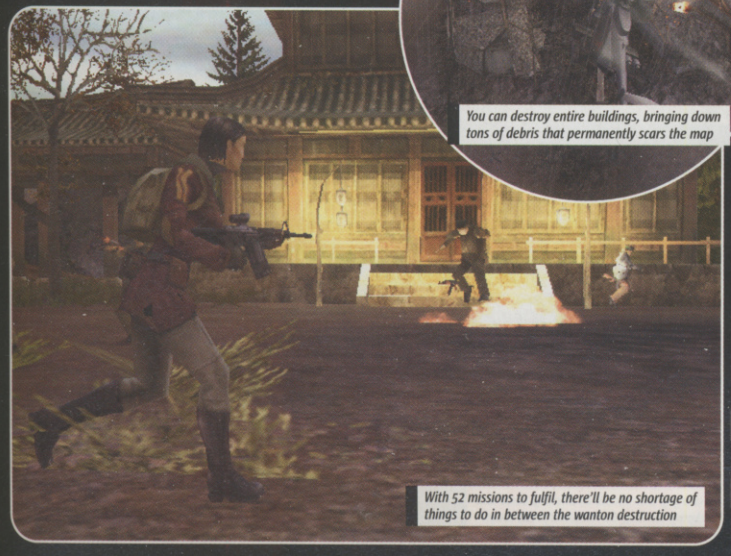
Until you see the game running with your own two eyes, you would be hard pushed to believe Mercenaries is designed for the likes of a common console. So complex and dynamic are the graphical effects that it looks like a high-end PC game. Ironically it looks like PC players are the ones who will miss out – initially at least – on what isn't just one of the most graphically stunning console games in development, but in terms of gameplay one of the most ambitious. ✳



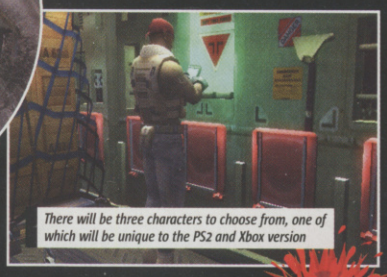
How else would you hope to steal a moving chopper?



You can destroy entire buildings, bringing down tons of debris that permanently scars the map



With 52 missions to fulfil, there'll be no shortage of things to do in between the wanton destruction



There will be three characters to choose from, one of which will be unique to the PS2 and Xbox version

CVG OPINION It lacks the dark humour of GTA and is unlikely to be as open-ended, but with many styles of play, Mercenaries is clearly going to be a superior military action game. **Richie**

WE LOVE
- Looks the business
- Destroy entire buildings with artillery or assault choppers

WE HATE
- No multiplayer options
- Blood- and gore-free
- Where are the baseball bats?

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

- PUBLISHER LUCASARTS
- DEVELOPER PANDEMIC STUDIOS
- OUT: SEPTEMBER

PC CD ROM | PS2 XBOX

ONLINE GAMING | x32

WWW.LUCASARTS.COM/GAME/SWBATTLEFRONT

The assault on Hoth, the epic battle for Geonosis, the final showdown across the forests of Endor... all classic Star Wars battles that have lit up the silver screen over the last 25 years. Finally, we'll be able to take part in them ourselves, when Star Wars Battlefront arrives this autumn. Dozens of players will re-enact virtually every major ground battle from the epic saga – plus a few that weren't.

Borrowing heavily from PC favourite Battlefield 1942, Battlefront forces players to pick a side (either Imperial Vs Rebels, or Republic Vs Separatist) and set about conquering the huge maps, either on foot or from the controls of dozens of authentic vehicles. These include everything from speeder bikes and Republic gunships to AT-ATs and even TIE Fighters. You won't be able to split open a tauntaun to stay warm, sadly, but you can't have everything. ✳

The PS2 version is graphically the weakest, but movement is fluid and terrain surprisingly dense

Battlefront is due for release on the same day the classic trilogy arrives on DVD

Each side has six player classes to choose from, two of which are special to that race

WE LOVE
- Massive online battles
- It's the Star Wars shooter we always wanted

WE HATE
- You can't be a Jedi
- Focused towards multiplayer battles so single-player may suffer

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

* PUBLISHER
EIDOS
* DEVELOPER
ION STORM
* OUT:
JUNE

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

His name is Garrett and he's the guy responsible for the whole 3D stealth thing. He has some tough rivals to deal with now, of course, but by the looks of things this thief has enough tricks up his sleeve to stay on top!

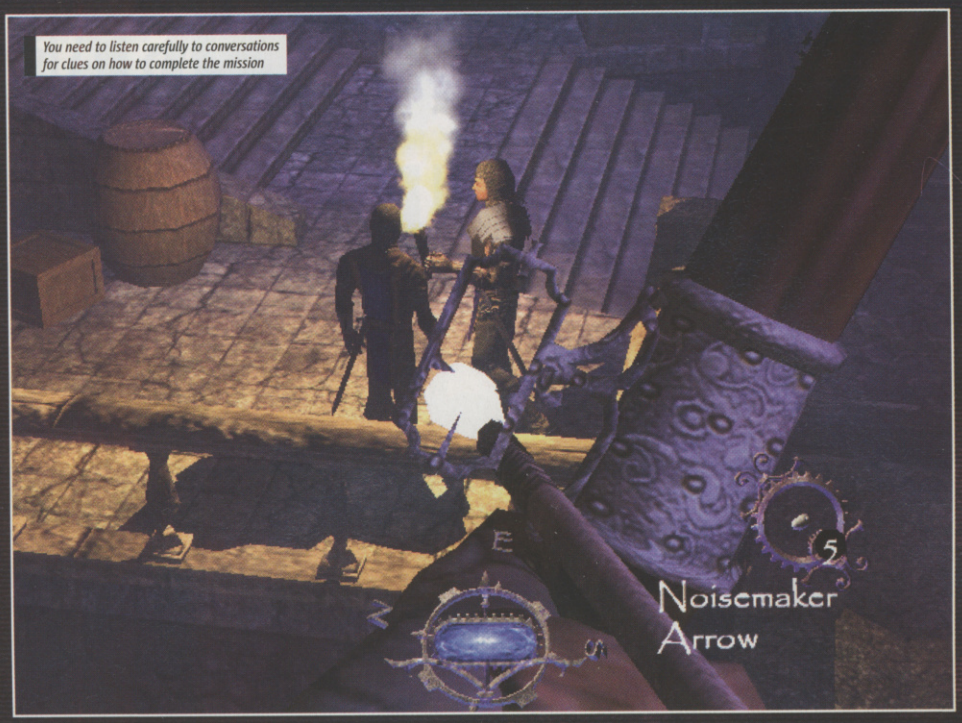
AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

ALSO ON

PC

WWW.THIEF3.COM



You need to listen carefully to conversations for clues on how to complete the mission

THIEF
DEADLY SHADOWS

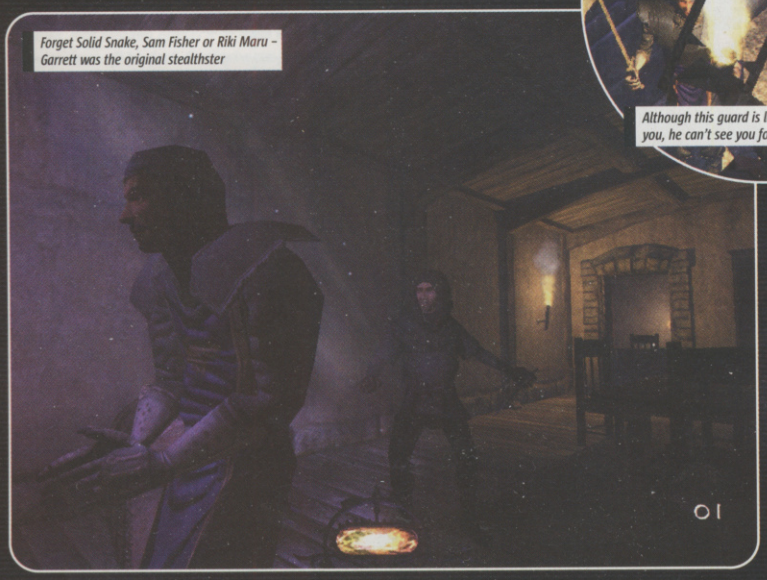
If you thought stealth kings Sam Fisher and Solid Snake were the first to sneak around, hiding in the shadows, putting out lights and knocking guys down for fun, you're wrong. That was that Abe dude, from Abe's Oddysee.

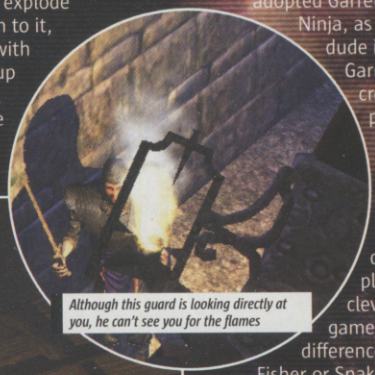
However, it was indeed a thief who was first to use stealth in three dimensions. One particular thief called Garrett, who wrote the book on creeping around, and now he's sneaking back to prove it.

BOY IN DA HOOD

Shamelessly medieval, Garrett runs the danger of being silly. He doesn't carry an assault rifle; he sports a bow and arrows. His outfit isn't a slick stealth suit; he looks like one of Robin Hood's merry men. Thing is, Garrett is a charismatic kind of miseryguts, along the lines of Sam Fisher. Plus, the many uses he has for such old-fashioned weaponry far surpasses anything Third Echelon can provide.

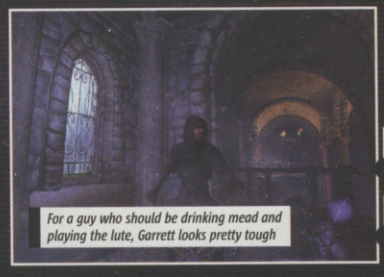
Garrett's main source of merriment is his range of arrows, which can be used to create a distraction (Noise), soften the sound of footsteps (Moss), suffocate (Gas), extinguish (Water), or explode (Fire). If it comes down to it, Garrett is also handy with weapons for fighting up close. Usually though, he'll try to manipulate enemies with his cunning tricks.


Forget Solid Snake, Sam Fisher or Riki Maru – Garrett was the original stealthster


Although this guard is looking directly at you, he can't see you for the flames

SHADOW DANCER

With Tenchu being a let-down, we've adopted Garrett as our Hey Nonny Ninja, as he's a wicked stealth dude in dark rags. With Garrett it's all about creating a distraction to pass silently in the shadows. Burning torches are put out then relit, confusing the hell out of guards. Shadows are created by strategically placed fires – technically clever and cool for the game. The biggest difference between Garrett and Fisher or Snake is how much control you have. Your progress through a level can be as dramatic or as low-key as you like. While there are no action set-pieces on a grand scale, there is the satisfaction of greater freedom. Detailed and moody locations, ranging from city streets to a vast, creaky ghost ship, provide an engrossing playground to experiment. We found ourselves stopping to admire scenes even when it wasn't necessary. Garrett's gonna be a great new asset for Xbox. *

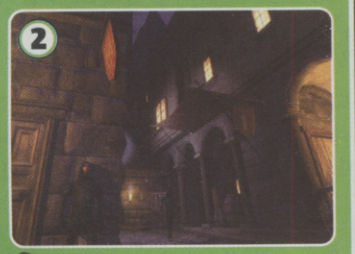

For a guy who should be drinking mead and playing the lute, Garrett looks pretty tough

CHECK MY BODY

You can play from a first- or third-person view, and you can switch anytime. Third-person is best to judge your position in relation to the environment, whereas first-person makes looking around easier.

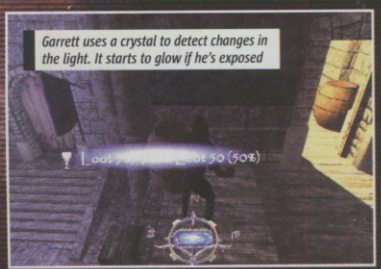
While in first person, the game has a neat 'body aware' feature, showing your limbs to help with positioning.

If you want a broader view of what lies ahead, first-person mode is the most useful



For general sneaking around, and to get a sense of scale, third-person mode is best

When aiming any projectile, the game auto-chooses first-person mode for you

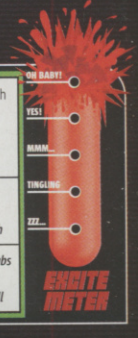

Garrett uses a crystal to detect changes in the light. It starts to glow if he's exposed

CVG OPINION

If you're hooked on stealth and looking for a major new fix, Garrett will grab you by the balls and haul your ass screaming to a new level in tension. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- Great stealth weapons and tools
- Intriguing and detailed locations
- Garrett is the Godfather of stealth

WE HATE
- He doesn't punch or kick, just stabs
- Drama is low-key compared to Metal Gear Solid and Splinter Cell



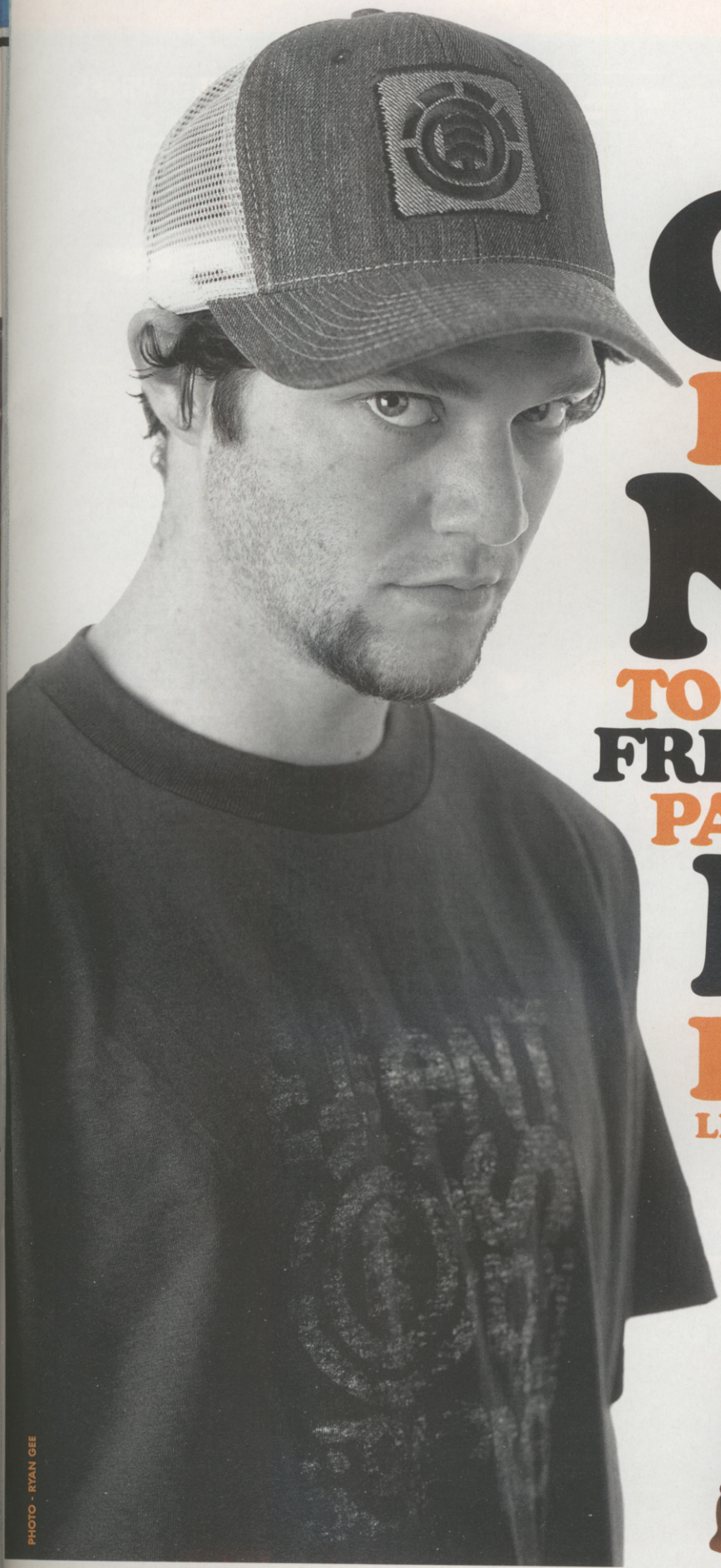


PHOTO - RYAN GEE

CALL HSCPLUS NOW

TO RECIEVE YOUR FREE CATALOGUE PACKED FULL OF BAM's PRODUCT,

LIKE THE BAM V2 ADIO SHOE!
AVAILABLE NOW
IN THE SPRING CATALOGUE

CALL NOW FOR YOUR FREE SKATEBOARD CATALOGUE

0800 479 0080
FREEPHONE

hsc plus
UK's NUMBER ONE SKATEBOARD MAILORDER

RED DEAD REVOLVER

- PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR
- DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO
- OUT: APRIL 30

IN A NUTSHELL

A slickedy sick arcadey Wild West gunslinger with bloody set-piece show-downs and blazingly quick action. Originally a Capcom game, Rockstar has upped the violence and realism to turn a dodgy genre into gold dust.

AVAILABLE ON

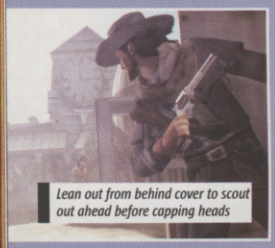
PS2

ALSO ON

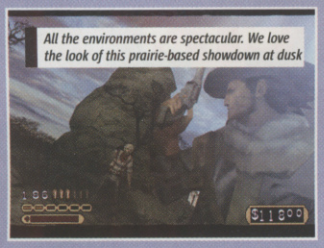
XBOX

WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM

Red's a bounty hunter and earns cash on his travels, which you can use to buy weapons and unlockable extras



Lean out from behind cover to scout out ahead before capping heads



All the environments are spectacular. We love the look of this prairie-based showdown at dusk

Right, don't go giving us the "I hate Westerns so I won't like this" crap. Sure, when they're bad they can be wicked dull, but done right they're rough-tough sons of bitches spitting attitude and thrills.

All the same, we weren't that convinced about Western-themed games, especially after reviewing Dead Man's Hand (see p93). But when we played Red Dead Revolver at Rockstar's offices, we left feeling like bonafide badass cowboys.

The San Diego team behind Midnight Club II has created a handsomely rugged Wild West arcade shooter with action faster and deadlier than a rattlesnake bite. Dust a-swirlin', hazy light pouring through the clouds, warbling Wild West music – Red Dead sucks you straight into its world, but then quickly pulls the trigger by hurling you into insanely fast and stylish gun-fighting scenarios.

Killing outlaws fills up your special attack gauge and enables you to use your Dead Eye ability

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

You're in a rickety old town, massively outnumbered by hoards of stinky buck-toothed outlaws. But Red, our hero, is a gun-slinging maestro. A bloody shoot-out kicks off as you stylishly pick off unwashed assassins. One guy crashes through a window when you nail him with a messy headshot, and another falls from a roof after you take his feet out from under him by shooting him in the ankles. Up close, you use fists and feet to wipe out a couple of goons before legging it into cover. But now you're really low on ammo, so every shot has to count.

Six-shooter in hand, you leap out and trigger Dead Eye mode. Time slows. You pass the aiming reticule over the head of one enemy, onto the chest of another, the balls and belly of a third, and the knees of the fourth. A small red circle appears over each of these targeted body parts. Now when you squeeze the trigger Red unleashes an explosive combo of rapid-fire shots in real-time, dropping all four enemies in a lightning takedown.

This is what a Western game should be like. All the best stuff is in here; saloons, horse-riding and giant battles scenes. It's outrageously fast and instinctive arcade fun that doesn't take itself too seriously. ✷

You can attack while on horseback. And the horsy stuff is much cooler than the pony efforts in Dead Man's Hand

STILL UNDER WRAPS

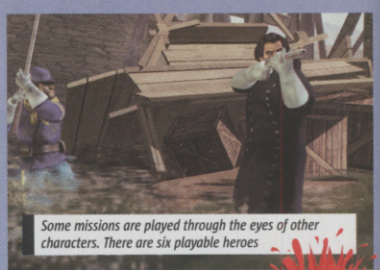
Rockstar still has a few surprises tucked under its poncho. Parts of Red Dead are yet to be unveiled, like the multiplayer options, boss battles and all the animals you get to ride.

But we did manage to dig out a few golden nuggets of information from Rockstar during our visit to their offices.

When you encounter a boss there'll be a gunfight followed by a quick draw show-down, which will trigger a different style of gameplay that's set to really test your reactions to the limit

There'll be multiplayer options for PS2 and Xbox, but neither version is online. Rockstar couldn't confirm numbers, but there'll obviously be a minimum of two players, plus bots!

You get to gallop around on horses at certain times, but CVG can reveal that you'll be able to ride different types of animals too, each with various strengths. Horses are fast and can trample enemies



Some missions are played through the eyes of other characters. There are six playable heroes

CVG OPINION

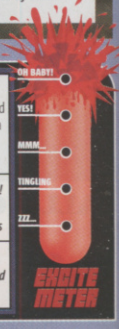
Looks slicker than Once Upon A Time In Mexico, and plays smoother than Salma Hayek's silky hips. Deadly, sexy and fresh. Good for Rockstar, bad for Capcom. **Mike**

WE LOVE

- The whole Western flavour. Ye-haw!
- Ace gun fights and Dead Eye mode
- Exciting Wild West-themed missions

WE HATE

- No online multiplayer
- The missions could be too short and become repetitive



SUDEKI

- PUBLISHER MICROSOFT
- DEVELOPER CLIMAX
- OUT: JUNE

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

An enormous RPG that fuses martial arts movie-style fights with traditional RPG elements like spells and treasure hunting. Delayed since before Christmas, we take a look at the new and improved, nearly finished epic.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.XBOX.COM/SUDEKI

UPDATE

This being a role-player, there's loads of standing around looking dead dramatic

Execute combos when your weapon flashes

WE meets Final Fantasy. Pecs 'n' breasts meet swords 'n' sorcery. Welcome to the world of Sudeki, which is under attack from an unknown force, and it's up to your band of top-heavy heroes to investigate. Happily, it's the kind of investigating where you get to slice enemies' limbs off in great fountains of blood, rather than the Miss Marple kind.

We've played through the slick opening areas of the game, and barely had time to get to grips with the beautiful, blood-soaked battle scenes before Big Bill gave his cronies the nod to usher us out of Microsoft's London HQ. We still managed to smuggle out some hot new screenshots and impressions, though.

AS BIG AS THE 'BOX

The scale of the Sudeki world is the first thing that lets you know this is something out of the ordinary. The winding streets and maze-like palace of the light world, Illumina, give way to vast open plains and towering citadels. It looks amazing, and the rule is if you can see it in the distance, you can run to it. It might take you ages, but you'll get there.

But the wick battles will keep you busy when trekking through the vast landscapes. Fights are in real-time, but you can slow the action right down when selecting items to use or spells to cast in menu screens. The effect is dazzling, showing off the acrobatic moves of your heroes as they tear their opponents to shreds. There are four main heroes in your party. You control one at a time and can set the AI of others when not under your control. Fighting is full of ace combos and powerful summon spells, and each encounter really feels like a proper fight to the death.

There's so much more to Sudeki too. There's the interplay between the light and dark worlds, and the way you have to explore both as you progress. There are dungeons full of co-operative puzzles where you have to use each hero's unique skill. There are spectacular boss fights and superb cut-scenes. So, if you like your RPGs big, brutal and overflowing with sticky giblet geysers, Sudeki looks like it'll be well up to challenge. ✳

Aw, looky here, there's a fekkin' big fire – perfect for toasting your baps on, love

The style is a bit Dark Chronicle and a little bit Black Forest. We're hoping there'll be gateaux and beer festivals later in the game

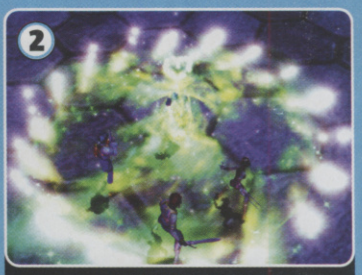
THREE OF THE BEST

With a game as big as Sudeki, we'd need a whole mag just to cover everything that's in it. We love the game but we're not gonna do that. Instead, here's CVG's three very bestest reasons why Sudeki is going to be so mind-blowing for RPG fans.

1

The morphing, twisted Shadow world is the conduit between the light and dark world

2



The awesome Spirit Strike attacks – unleash a devastating summon beast. Woop woop!

3

It's got blood! And lots of it too. The characters may look cutesie, but the gibs really do fly in combat

Allish is the female lead. Nice cloak of light, love

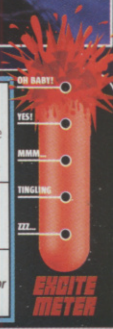
It's not turn-based, but that doesn't mean it can't have in-depth item management and saucy spells like this Guard magic

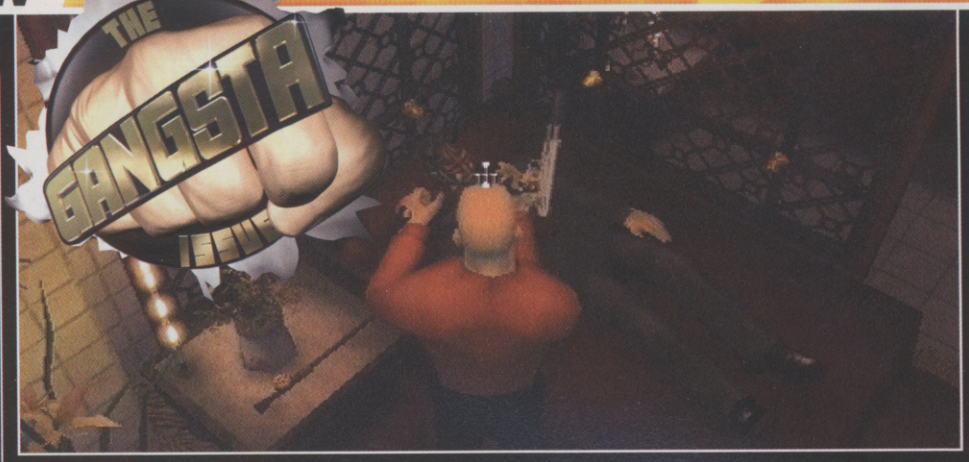
This is what happens when you imbue totems with mystical energy. They go bad and start attacking. Nasty

CVG OPINION There's so much quality stuff rammed into Sudeki that it's sure to become the gaming world's favourite action RPG and reason enough to buy a 'box for. Sweet. **Lee**

WE LOVE
- Beautiful and huge environments
- Real-time fights are wicked fun
- Combining heroes' skills

WE HATE
- Our one small quibble is with the slightly cheesy character designs for your main crew





HITMAN CONTRACTS

He was killing himself slowly anyway... Agent 47 just stepped in to speed things up

- PUBLISHER: EIDOS
- DEVELOPER: IO INTERACTIVE
- OUT: MAY

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Aching and cold, nasty like a toothache in the back of your head... One word keeps pricking at your brain when playing Hitman: Contracts. That word is 'harsh', and it sums up the third instalment in the Hitman series.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX, PC

WWW.HITMANCONTRACTS.COM

UPDATE

As Agent 47 fulfils his contracts in gory detail, it's hard to know if he's a hero or a hoodlum. He does what he has to do to survive.

Nameless, he's an enigma. He introduces himself bullet by bullet from his clips, or by squeezing the necks of his garrotted victims. In Hitman: Agent 47, and the sequel Hitman 2, that was as much information as you got. But in Contracts, you're only ever one bloody footprint away from a clue to 47's past. Yep, we're finally going to find out what drives this merciless killing machine.

ONCE MORE FOR THE CAMERA

We've grown to like Agent 47 as a dour antidote to 007's suave sophistication; crucially, his missions are fewer and broader than the objectives that face Bond. When the only rule is to survive, everything else goes out of the window. Faced with decisions, you can be as delicate or brutal as you wish, and the amorality that underpins your choices can't fail but to force a reaction from you one way or the other. You might feel proud, for example, to have maintained cover from start to finish, but equally psyched if you slaughtered every guy in the vicinity. You make your choices, and live with them.

COSTUME DRAMA

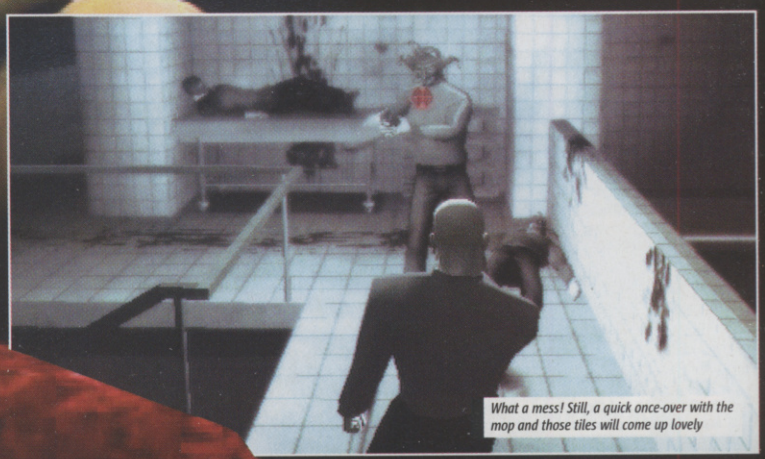
Certainly the emphasis is more on stealth in Contracts; remaining undetected and dropping enemies where they stand with all-new close-combat techniques. It's much stealthier than either of the previous games, but that's because the enemy AI is vastly improved. So although you can still wear the clothing of victims to use as a disguise, you must take care whose path you cross and how you cross it for the disguise to work.

The first level is a Sanitarium, where you have the option of dressing like an inmate to bypass guards on the lookout for you. In this scenario, it's okay to run around like you don't know what you're doing, because so is everyone else. Act like a nut while dressed as a senior-ranking officer, and

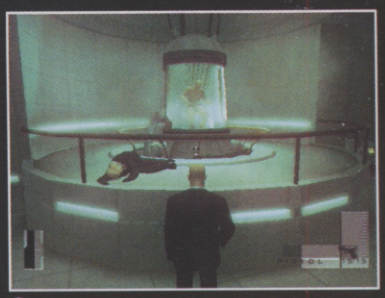
Everyone treats you with suspicion in Hitman - you may as well get used to it

"WEAR THE CLOTHING OF YOUR VICTIMS AS A DISGUISE TO AVOID BEING CAUGHT BY THE GUARDS"

Act crazy and these guards won't be able to tell you apart from all the other inmates



What a mess! Still, a quick once-over with the mop and those tiles will come up lovely

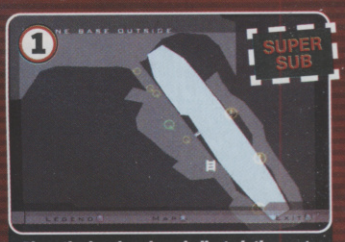


Agent 47 is a clone, but we knew that. Everyone in the Sanitarium kinda looks like him!

TO DO LIST

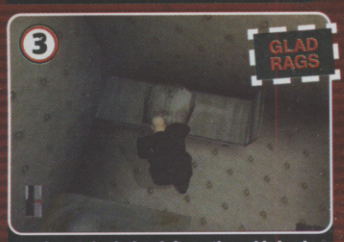
All of Agent 47's objectives are laid out in a detailed map of the area. Enemies are represented by a crossed circle – if they're alerted they show up red.

Points of interest – a stash of clothes or useful person – are highlighted by exclamation marks. It's all very straightforward, just surviving is the hard part!



Place the bombs where indicated, then get the hell out of the area before detonating

Guys are waiting at the rear of the plane, but there's a chance you could sneak out front



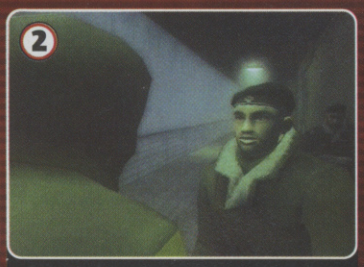
An inmate's clothes left neatly on his bunk, waiting for you to wear them as a disguise

AT YOUR SERVICE

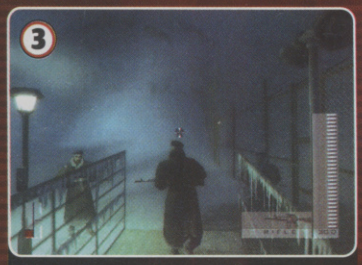
Posing as someone else isn't just about dressing the part. When asked to deliver Opium to a guest in the Fetish Club, you must behave as though you've done this 100 times before.

Even if you get so far without raising suspicion, there are routine searches to pass. If you're carrying anything other than standard-issue for the role, your cover will be blown. Of course, it's sometimes cool to wait for the Mini Uzi to be found. Surprise!

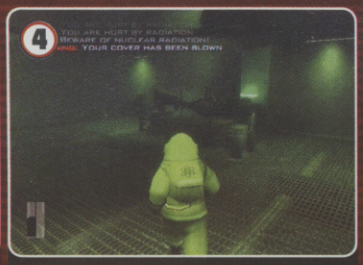
Fresh tomatoes and all that jazz, dude. Where do you want me to drop this rabbit food?



A search is 'standard procedure'. Unless you like a challenge, discard all weapons first



Best not to go running around like you need a pee at the train station, or you'll be spotted



Nobody can see your face or smell your fear when parading around in this stupid outfit

subordinates are gonna suss something's up – you have to know your way around and look good getting there.

DENS OF INIQUITY

In the early stages of Contracts, a procession of disturbing scenes forms the backdrop to Agent 47's nightmarish memoirs. You're reliving 47's past by completing the tasks, so for example, you get to join him in his escape from the cloning ward of the Sanitarium, through a Fetish Club in a slaughterhouse, across a Siberian wasteland and ultimately to the seedier side of Hong Kong.

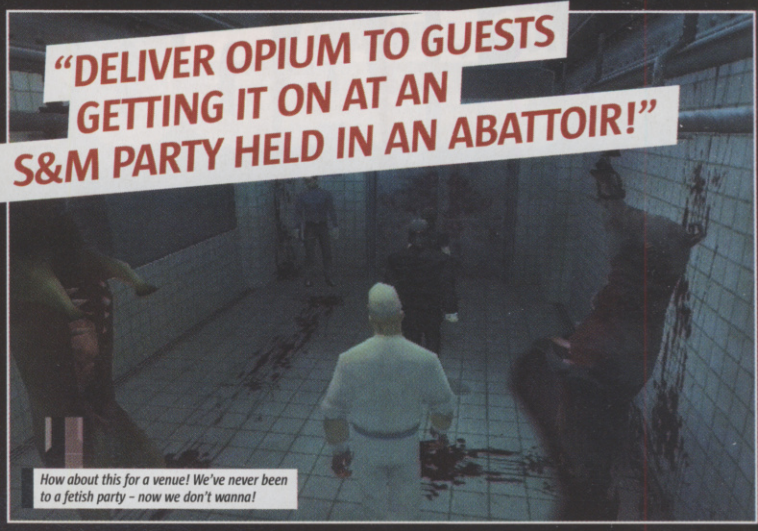
It's claustrophobic and oppressive, from dodging the Sanitarium's inmates to serving Opium to crooked bank managers, and gunning down 'waiters' in the Wang Fou restaurant. The temptation is always to shoot first, but of course it's wisest to keep your weapon concealed.

GUN CLUB

As with the previous games, the boon with Contracts is the total freedom to behave as you wish and complete the mission. After playing Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow, and more recently Thief: Deadly Shadows, it's refreshing to know you can just go in guns blazing. To hell with undercover, just bring it on! And, while SCPT makes a big deal of having two or three alternate routes through missions, you only have to play the Sanitarium level to realise Contracts is alternate routes gone mad!

But the thing that'll really make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end is that you do need to become like 47 to survive. At all times you have the power to risk his life, but you're compelled to take measured steps in order to complete missions in style. ✷

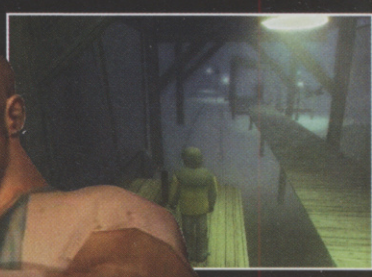
"DELIVER OPIUM TO GUESTS GETTING IT ON AT AN S&M PARTY HELD IN AN ABATTOIR!"



How about this for a venue! We've never been to a fetish party – now we don't wanna!

You'll have a lot more fun bowling in there guns a-blazin', but you'll be branded a thug

White-out and slo-mo – you're hit!



The hooded anorak: the ultimate disguise

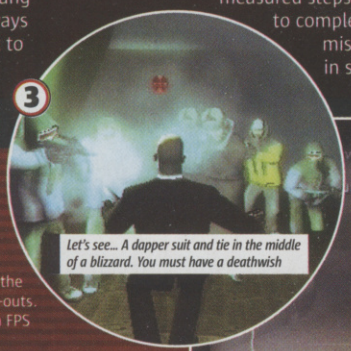
THE SMOKING GUN

There's no hand of God to pluck you out of the game just because you triggered too many alarms, so Agent 47 has to stay in control at all times.

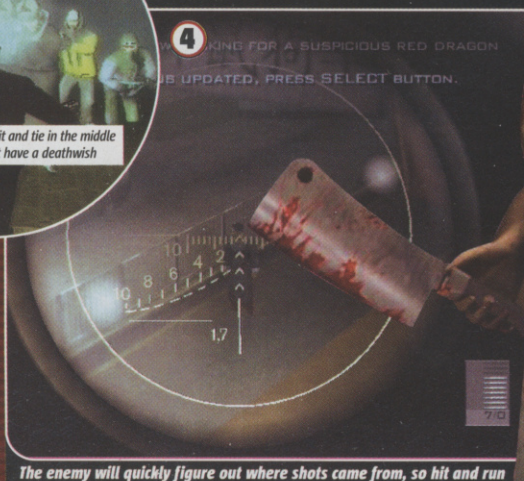
When we attempted Massacre At The Cheung Chau Fish Restaurant, we thought we'd play it sneaky. Then we figured 'What the heck' and settled into some FPS-style shoot-outs. And if anything, Contracts handles better in FPS mode, at least in our opinion.

The obligatory John Woo-style sequences with twin pistols claiming chunks of flesh!

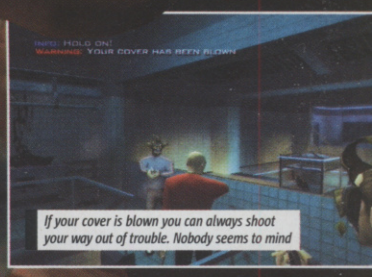
It gets noisy with all these rounds going off. Your ears will be ringing



Let's see... A dapper suit and tie in the middle of a blizzard. You must have a deathwish



The enemy will quickly figure out where shots came from, so hit and run



If your cover is blown you can always shoot your way out of trouble. Nobody seems to mind

CVG OPINION

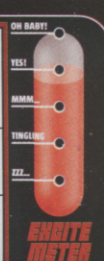
Builds on everything we've come to admire about Hitman, which can only be a good thing. This version was kinda early, so let's see how the final code shapes up...

WE LOVE

- Freedom to do it your own way
- Really creepy and very violent
- Finding out about Agent 47's past

WE HATE

- Learning curve is dead severe
- Some close-range moves look odd
- Occasionally nonsensical puzzles



SHADOW OPS RED MERCURY

* PUBLISHER ATARI
* DEVELOPER ZOMBIE
* OUT: JUNE

ONLINE GAMING | x4

IN A NUTSHELL

A frantic first-person shooter that, like every other new game right now, is set in the real world of international terrorism. Stunning visuals and sounds, great level design and oodles of online play add to the enjoyment.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.US.ATARI.COM/GAMES/SHADOW_OPS_RM_XBOX_ACTION

The Alpine levels have a very GoldenEye feel to them. Ooh, a sniper rifle!

Game developers don't get out much. We know this because there aren't many games about meeting up with your mates and going out for a laugh. Games with The Matrix's Bullet Time, on the other hand, are bountiful.

This is because programmers love DVDs. They love watching movies. They can do it in the dark and they get lots of ideas from them. While The Matrix was yesterday's love, Black Hawk Down seems to be their current fave. Platoons of titles have emerged in recent months all clearly inspired by the 'realism' of the action-packed movie.

BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE

Shadow Ops wears its inspiration like a Purple Heart on its sleeve. It was created after the designers saw Black Hawk Down and said to themselves: 'Let's make a game just like that'. Not that we're objecting or anything.

From the opening moments it's clear that Shadow Ops is a very classy first-person shooter. The action is frantic. The locations are wonderfully detailed and the 5.1 surround sound is bone-shattering.

Shadow Ops sees you stepping into the boots of an elite Delta Force operative assigned to the CIA's Special Missions Unit, handed the task of tracking down nuclear devices before they're sold to terrorists. It's a globe-trotting bullet-fest that takes you on a tour of Syria, the African Congo, Kazakhstan and Chechnya too.

Like the best action movie, you're thrown into the middle of the action. Surprisingly, it's also very simple and straightforward. Unlike many recent shooters, although you're part of an elite squad, there are no team orders. The missions are very direct and all about you, with a Heads-Up Display indicating the direction and distance of next objectives.

Although you're part of a team, you don't give orders to troops

Fans of the Medal Of Honor series and even GoldenEye veterans should start getting excited because it looks like Shadow Ops could come very close to matching the class of those gaming goliaths. ✷

SOUNDS SCHPLENDID

On the subject of Black Hawk Down, Zombie was so impressed with the sound in the film that the boys went out and hired the same sound designers to work on Shadow Ops.

The result is authentic sounding gunfire for over 20 different weapons, great voice dialogue and plenty of atmospheric ambient noises. Your speakers better be up to scratch!

Pity screenshots don't have sound! If they did we'd be scared by those chopper blades

That tank makes a mighty boom and the shower of dirt and sand sounds real!

Wonder if Jaws, Odd Job and Scaramanga will be secret characters too?

That's not the most effective camouflage we've seen

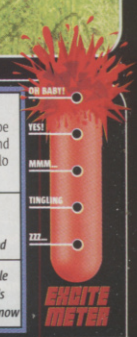
Playing a dangerous game of hide and seek in the rubble

Enemies have a habit of popping up from behind scenery – a bit like Time Crisis

CVG OPINION Shadow Ops looks and sounds brilliant. Let's hope enemy AI can match it and later levels deliver variety. If they do, Halo should start getting worried. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- Better-than-Halo sound effects!
- Locations packed with cover
- Intense action keeps you engaged

WE HATE
- Character models are quite simple
- Some sections are almost on rails
- Enemy attacks too scripted right now



The scale of the outdoor environments is impressive, as are the wind effects on Rhama's tails

GALLEON

* PUBLISHER
SCI
* DEVELOPER
CONFOUNDING FACTOR
* OUT:
MAY

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

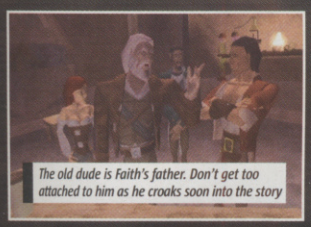
Pirates! Boats! Treasure! Mysterious artefacts! We get more hands-on time with a very nearly finished version of the beleaguered action game. We never thought we'd say it, but it's bloomin' amazing!

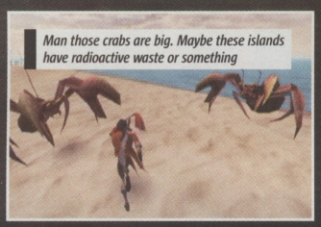
AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.SCI.CO.UK/GAMES/BASIC.ASP?VERSION_ID=73

UPDATE


The old dude is Faith's father. Don't get too attached to him as he croaks soon into the story


Man those crabs are big. Maybe these islands have radioactive waste or something

In-game totty Faith examines Rhama's Tefal head for signs of Elephantiasis

Surprises, eh. Sometimes they suck. Imagine opening a tin of beans ready to heat and pour on a couple of nice 'n' thick doorstep toast slices, only to find that the beans have been replaced with sharks' eyes and weevils. Bad. Galleon on the other hand is a good surprise. It has taken forever to get here, changing formats more often than J.Lo's fiancés, and all the signs were that it was going to be a stinker. But the only thing Galleon smells of is roses, albeit salty ones.

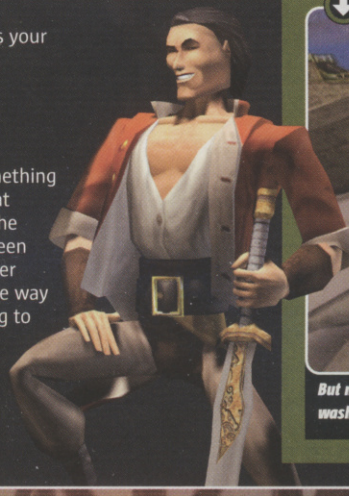
GLAD TO BE GALLEON

It plays a bit like Tomb Raider without the crap controls. Like Zelda but with real human characters. At times it's as fast as Sonic, at others exploring is as precise as Prince Of Persia. It's promised to be easily as big as a Final Fantasy game, with a Wind Waker-trumping island-hopping plot. It's staggering, and the only thing letting the game down is the fact it looks a bit weird. Not bad, just odd. But even the biggest graphics whores will struggle not to see beyond Rhama's bizarre collarbone and giant ham chin, or the game world's smooth scrolling but strangely muted flat landscapes. There's just so much to enjoy here.

The story begins as Captain Rhama disembarks on the island of Akbah, and is drawn into a murky plot involving a mysterious galleon and precious magical herbs that can harm as well as heal. It's the start of a huge adventure and exploring is effortless. Unusually, you control the camera rather than Rhama himself. Look where you want to go and Rhama will set off that way. The inertia effects as you change direction are cool, and the intelligent interface makes your hero roll under gaps and leap over obstacles automatically and with swashbuckling beauty.

LOVE A GOOD STORY

But more than all this, there's something about the way the plot unfolds that should make Galleon irresistible. The quality of the voice-acting we've seen so far is some of the best we've ever heard, and the lip-synching and the way the characters move when chatting to each other gives the impression these are real, three-dimensional (in the dramatic sense) heroes. It also helps you see past the weird visual style to the fantastic adventure underneath. *



FREE WILL, BROTHER

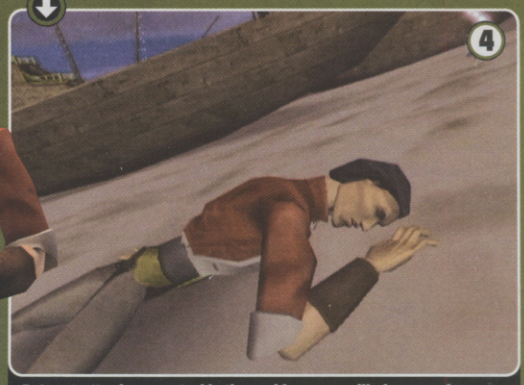
Galleon's a massive game. Cleverly, it gives you the illusion of free will while all the time forcing you to follow the game's own path.

An early example is when you have to chase across cliff tops to prevent the crims from nicking the mysterious galleon in the waters below. Here's what happened when we tackled it three different ways.

We dawdled across the cliffs but leapt like a happy gazelle into the water and tried to catch up with the ship – but were too slow

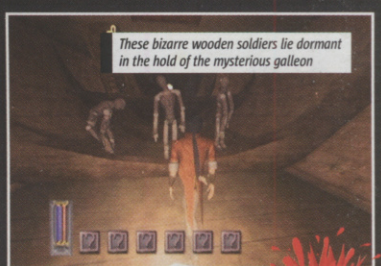
Modifying our approach, we legged it across the hills and into the water beside the ship and sneakily crept aboard

Changing our tactics we leapt directly onto the boat from a great height. We broke Rhama's legs and were thrown overboard



But no matter how you tackle the problem, you will always end up washed up on the beach so that the story can continue

Anything that shimmers gold can be meddled with by simply pressing B. We like the cannon way too much

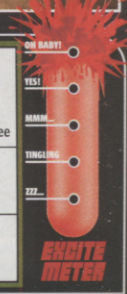

These bizarre wooden soldiers lie dormant in the hold of the mysterious galleon

CVG OPINION

Thrilling, fast, dramatic, funny... the compliments come harder and faster than cannonball fire. All that hard work to get it finished has paid off spectacularly. **Lee**

WE LOVE
- Smooth and classy mixture of gameplay elements
- Enormous believable world

WE HATE
- It really does look very strange
- Lots of tiny loading breaks
- Rhama's legs are scarily thin



ONIMUSHA BLADE WARRIORS

* PUBLISHER CAPCOM
* DEVELOPER CAPCOM
* OUT: 28 MAY

ONLINE GAMING | x4

IN A NUTSHELL

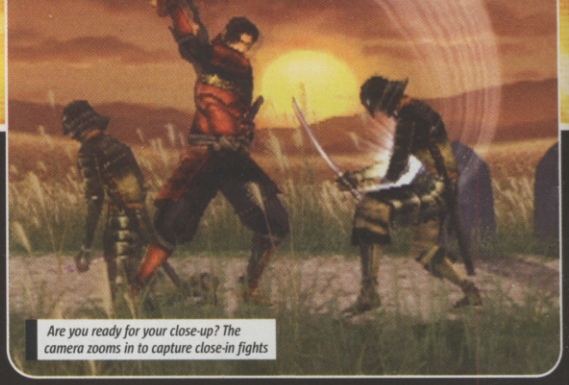
The Japanese samurai-slasher/zombie-gutter series jumps from adventure to fighting game. Don't worry, Onimusha 3'll be along in a minute. But meanwhile, this is four-player martial arts mayhem. Banzai!

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.CAPCOM.COM/XPML/GAME.XPML?GAMEID=750060

After many long hours going solo in the Onimusha universe, at last - four-way play!



Are you ready for your close-up? The camera zooms in to capture close-in fights

SUCK-CESS

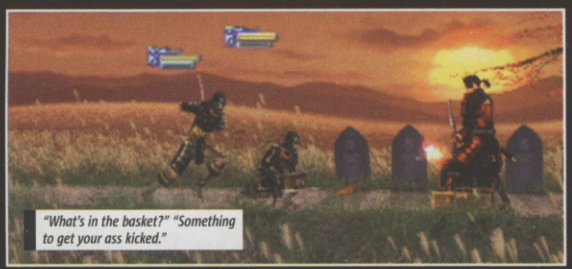
The difference between this and any of the many other beat 'em ups out there is the deranged power-up system.

You're not just knocking the stuffing out of enemies, but their orb souls too. Then hit a button to suck 'em up. More souls means more power!

Whack the bad guys and these orbs float out of them

You're not the only one who can make like a Hoover. Stand-off!

Multi-player tug of war. You can only keep pulling for your team if you're not being hit, so there's some team tactics required here



"What's in the basket?" "Something to get your ass kicked."

As odd moves for a game series go, this ranks alongside Doom 3 turning out to be a bubblegum platform game, or hey, Final Fantasy suddenly turning all girly pop (ahem). But in this case, the move looks pretty cool – Blade Warriors has swapped Onimusha's usual adventuring for four-player fighting.

Not as cool as Onimusha 3 looks, granted. But while we're busy wetting our pants waiting for Jean Reno to tackle samurai zombies in modern-day Paris (see our import review on p101), this could provide plenty of soul-sucking diversions.

The vampiric antics in the series up until now have resulted in your weapon gaining levels, and snaffling free-floating souls is still part of Blade Warriors. But this time, instead of levelling up a single weapon, the souls can be spent directly on your character's attributes like magic, attack and defence.

SAMURAI SMASH

Also carried over from the Onimusha series are the characters. Both the feudal Japanese good guys and their undead enemies are playable, and each character has their own story arc to play through plus weapons to collect.

Whether you select a good guy or bad guy, multiplayer or single-player story mode, the fights play out in multi-level arenas. A double-jump up or duck down will move you from one level to the next and there are chests to open and grab items as well as spells from.

Power-ups mixed with the diverse arenas means gameplay does have more than a little in common with Super Smash Bros Melee and PowerStone. There's a lot of chasing, then hitting, then running away, but Blade Warrior's visuals are superior and more adult than its cartoony forefathers.

Combat is shaping up nicely too. Despite slightly dumb bosses at present, the fighting system, with its emphasis on counter-blows and timing plus a guard that is depleted by enemies' repeated attacks, means this spin-off could be the first in a slick series in its own right. *

The demons of the nether dimensions loved Changing Rooms

As well as the usual hordes, many stages see you fighting against mini-bosses

Power up and blast your enemies in true samurai style

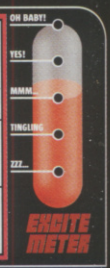
"Read the small print: you're an organ donor, you're dead... so gimme that liver"

CVG OPINION

Solid beat 'em up that plays like an adult Smash Bros. Promises to up the four-way fighting ante with added soul-sucking power-ups and sexy grown-up visuals. **Simon**

WE LOVE
- *Multi-level arenas; weapons chests*
- *The soul-sucking power-up system*
- *Multiplayer tugs-of-war – phwoar!*

WE HATE
- *The cheesy story cut-scenes*
- *Having to find our multi-tap*
- *Monster AI needs tuning up*



Disgaea Hour of Darkness

* PUBLISHER
KOEI
* DEVELOPER
NIPPON ICHI
* OUT:
MAY

ONLINE GAMING

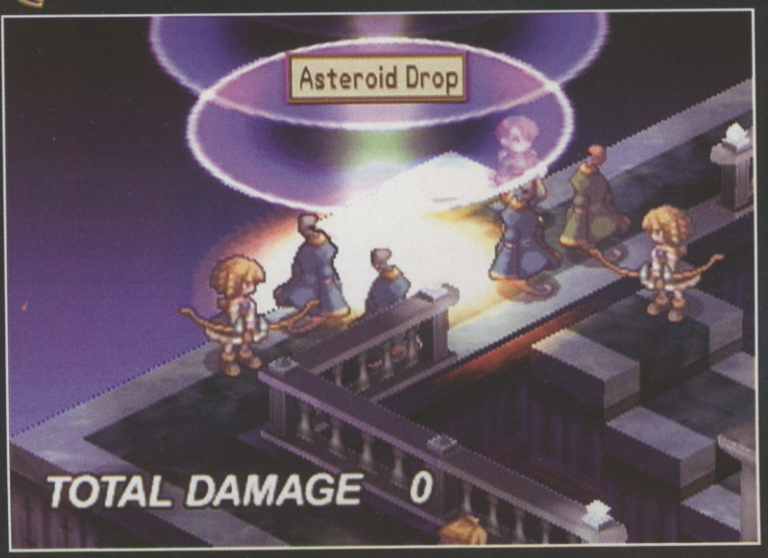
IN A NUTSHELL

Unashamedly retro-looking strategy role-player, that mixes the play of Advance Wars with the complexity of Unlimited Saga and adds some original, super-sophisticated, character-building madness!

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.ATLUS.COM/DIS



Special attacks vary from hero to hero and depend on how well you've raised them

LOOK WHAT YOU CAN DO!

Leaving aside the quirky/crap visuals, there's a whole lot more in the mix that makes Disgaea an original strategy gem.

You can lob enemies around, carry towers of team-mates on your back, buddy up in dazzling formation attacks and explode special Geo Stones that cause mad things to happen on the field.

Before you create new pupils, you'll need to get your creations approved by the Assembly

Use Geo Stones imaginatively and you can destroy waves of enemies in one simple attack

Lift allies onto each other to let you throw them around the field thus covering lots more ground

More weirdness when you activate a combo attack between two Prinny (penguin-type) fighters

New-look CVG has a new rule. No boring screenshots that don't mean anything. No menus, no stats screens and definitely nothing showing dull as arseholes level-up progression trees. A good rule then, but in sticking to it, we're concerned we might be misrepresenting what Disgaea is all about.

True, there's much cool spell-casting and enemy-bashing in the battle sequences. However, a lot of the game revolves around careful tactical planning, the subtle balancing of equipment and the intricate creation of new characters – or pupils – and training them up and kitting them out. It's scarily in-depth, but if strategy is your thing then this is surely going to be the pinnacle.

Set in a cartoony underworld inhabited by comically evil vampires and demons, the story is total nonsense, but the action is fantastically hardcore. The backgrounds are awful and sprites aren't going to be to everyone's taste, but the explosions rock the screen and the clever strategies you employ on the battlefield easily make up for the PSone quality visuals.

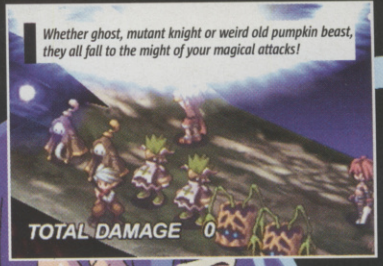
LOOKS SICK, PLAYS SKILL

Once you get over the fact there are no tanks or spaceships in the game (deal with it), you'll learn to love your human and monster pupils' subtly different abilities. You can call in up to ten of your heroes to battle on each field. Their specialisms include melee combat, magic, healing, archery, smithwork and way beyond.

By cleverly aligning your heroes alongside each other in specific formations against an enemy, you can unleash intensely powerful combo attacks that destroy waves of enemies. You can even use the terrain and the wildly varied effects of Geo Stones placed around the field to your advantage. Such effects include multiplying enemy damage and setting off monstrous chain reactions that blow holes in the battlefield. We've only just scratched the surface of what Disgaea offers. We love it, even if it isn't very cool to admit it.

Bzzzt! The spell effects certainly spice up the otherwise shonky graphics a bit. Sprites are so last decade, man

It's so hardcore that even to level up weapons you have to enter the Item World and battle it out to prove your worth



Whether ghost, mutant knight or weird old pumpkin beast, they all fall to the might of your magical attacks!

Call out your ten-man army from the portal in clever formations to destroy enemies with ease

CVG OPINION

Totally niche but also totally excellent. Not as trendy as Advance Wars or FF Tactics, but far more complex and rewarding. Strategy fans will love it. **Lee**

WE LOVE
- Tactics are brain-popping
- Create armies of heroes!
- Mad sense of humour

WE HATE
- The graphics are awful and low-res
- Cute style won't please everyone
- No appeal for action fans (stuff 'em)

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK

"ONLY TWO HEROES START WITH A GUN. OFTEN YOU USE IMPROVISED WEAPONS LIKE BOTTLES"

- PUBLISHER CAPCOM
- DEVELOPER CAPCOM
- OUT: JULY 2004

ONLINE GAMING | X4

IN A NUTSHELL

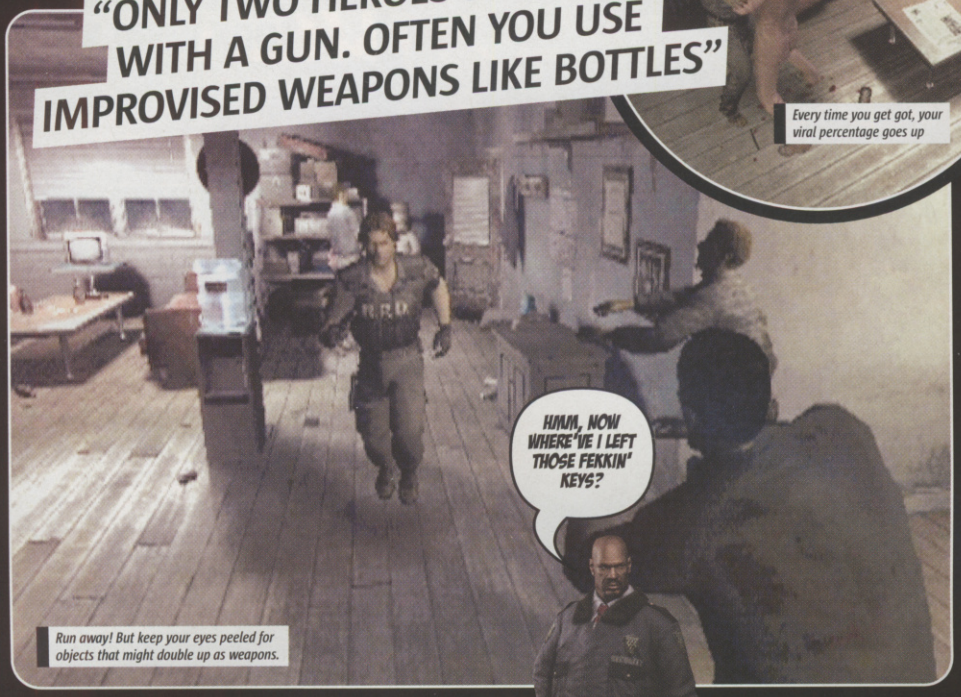
The daddy of survival horror makes it back to the PS2. And if that wasn't enough, it's online with up to three other amigos too (well until we're told otherwise, that is). Time to pack some spare undies!

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.CAPCOM.COM/XPML/GAME.XPML?GAMEID=750070

UPDATE



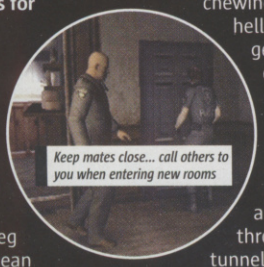
Run away! But keep your eyes peeled for objects that might double up as weapons.

Every time you get got, your viral percentage goes up

"The map says: 'we're up a creek'. Apparently."

Resident Evil is the godfather of survival horror. But while upstarts like Silent Hill have been stealing the limelight recently, Resi's been languishing in Cube remakes and dodgy prequels for what seems like years.

Outbreak could be the game to re-establish Resi as the premiere pant-wetting adventure series. It's online (in Japan and US at least – we're STILL waiting to hear if Capcom will shaft us here) and it features a ton of new things to do and horrors to leg it from. But do fresh ideas mean there's fresh meat to tuck into?



Keep mates close... call others to you when entering new rooms

PARTY OF FIVE

Outbreak features five large adventures – they're the same in single or online-only multiplayer. Each takes a few hours to crack, so it should work out about as big as Code Veronica – that's plenty of puzzle-solving and zombie-clubbing to get your gnashers into.

The game starts in a Raccoon City bar. While the eight main characters (see far right box) are chewing the fat, one customer is chewing on brains. All shambling hell breaks loose. You've got to get people out of the bar, up onto the roof and across to another building. From there it's a swim (just one of the new moves – see above right box) through water-filled tunnels, and finally building a bomb while being assaulted by waves of zombies.

And that's just the first mission – and the start of the outbreak. Later you tackle the Raccoon City Hospital and an Umbrella secret base, in missions spanning a timeline of all three of the first Resi games.

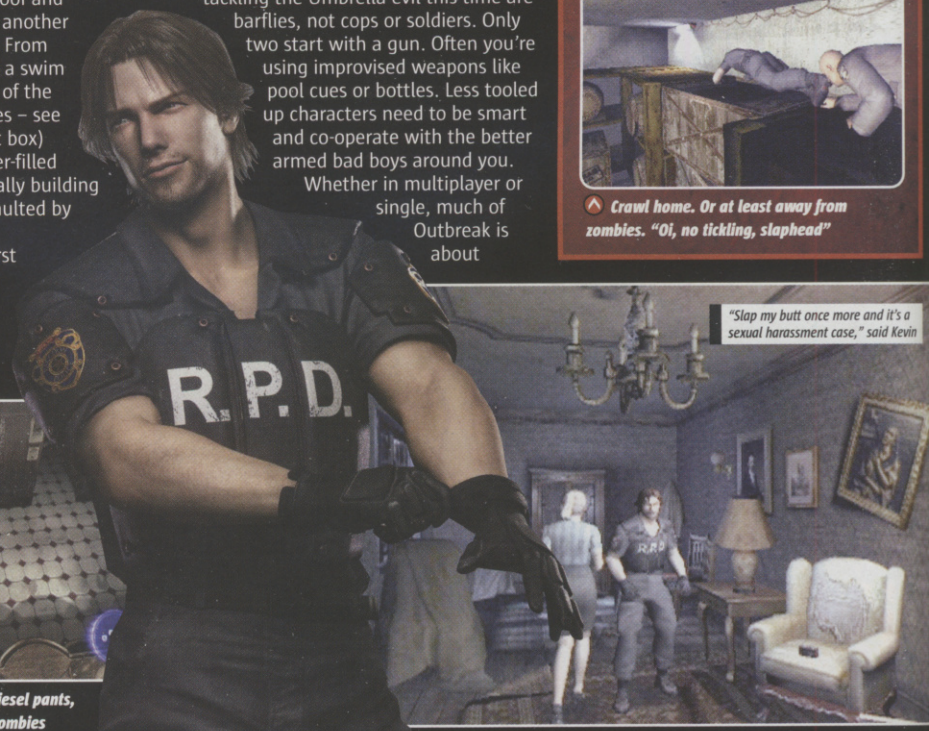
BAR BRAWLERS

Another cool new twist is that most heroes tackling the Umbrella evil this time are barflies, not cops or soldiers. Only two start with a gun. Often you're using improvised weapons like pool cues or bottles. Less tooled up characters need to be smart and co-operate with the better armed bad boys around you.

Whether in multiplayer or single, much of Outbreak is about

Swap objects from one character to another – so long as they're in the same room

"I gotta have those new Diesel pants, lady." Bloody fashion victim zombies



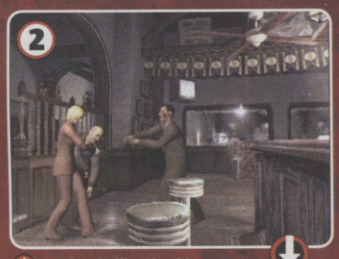
"Slap my butt once more and it's a sexual harassment case," said Kevin

GET ON THE FLOOR

New Resident Evil, new dance moves. Okay, not dance moves exactly, but your characters can get nifty with whole new ways of working their environment to their advantage.

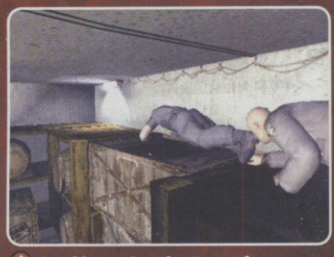
And, of course, to the disadvantage of those pesky brain-chewers. Which is all good after the formulaic features and gameplay we've come to expect from the series of late.

Big box, little box. Now you can block doors to stop advancing hordes



Do the shuffle. Shoulder-carry limping friends to safety, hero-style

Nowhere to run – but you can hide in lockers. No Snake though. Shame



Crawl home. Or at least away from zombies. "Oi, no tickling, slaphead"

Gemini. World staring champ. Loves romantic dinners and can remove her own bra one-handed

Pisces. Enjoys evenings in front of the fire. And naked bear-wrestling.

Taurus. Used to be in a boy band. Very 'creative' in the sack, laydeez

Capricorn. Hugh Grant impersonator. Watch your drink if you go clubbing

RACCOON CITY DATING SERVICES

Eight lonely singletons stuck in a bar in downtown Racoon City, all wondering what to do with their lives (think Marilyn Manson fan club and you're getting there).

It's your job to pick a character. But why go for sensible reasons like their unique skills and strengths as part of a team when you can pick 'em because you LURVE them...

Leo. Hobbies include collecting Tonka toys and dying his hair to match all over. Rrroar baby!

He's the pee-officer with a heart. Kinky little sod. Sagittarius, of course

Virgo. Does his badge actually say "scrotum"? If so, he's sorry

Scorpio. Her unique powers make her dead popular at swingin' parties

working as a team. You can make context-sensitive appeals with one button, or use combos to order people more specifically. If you're in the same room you can share inventories too.

"IT'S CLEAR THAT CAPCOM IS TRYING HARD TO MAKE RESI RELEVANT AND SCARY AGAIN"

BARKING MAD

What you can't do is speak into a headset online – Capcom says this is to keep the tension up. But the upshot in single-player (and the less co-ordinated multiplayer sessions) is that the game is awash with shouting idiots running around in circles. And you NEED these idiots to help you with a proportion of the classic Resi puzzles.

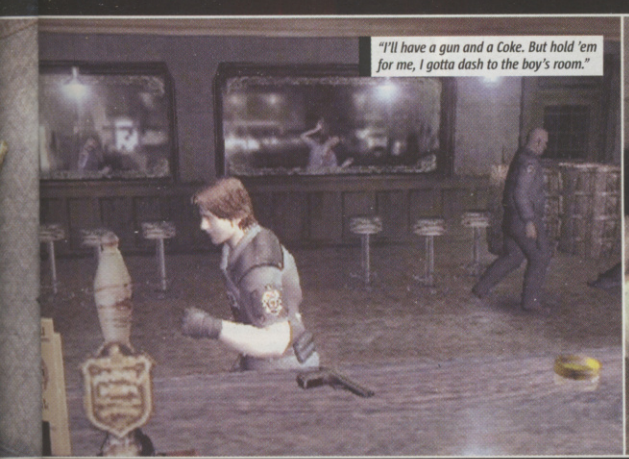
This means mastering the awkward order system to avoid you (or them) ending as zombie-brekkie and, while characters DO come back after each scenario, their deaths affect your rating plus the ending you get. Another – albeit lesser – gripe is the loading time, made all the worse by zombies occasionally pushing you through doors while trying to chomp you.

DARK SIDE OF THE DOOM

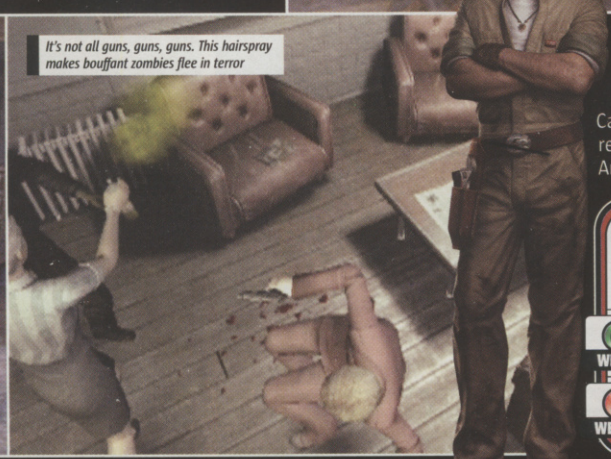
On the plus side, Outbreak plays fast and scary. There's no let up – zombies chase you through areas, break down doors you've barred and repopulate areas you've left. There's even the chance to indulge your dark side in multiplayer. As your party get chomped, their viral percentage rises, they slow down and start limping. Hit 100 per cent and you're dead. Unless you're online. In which case you join the ranks of the flesh-eating undead, and chase down other players!

With options like that it's clear Capcom is trying hard to make Resi relevant, scary and interesting again. And it could well work. ✷

The crows are back. And they're still annoying



"I'll have a gun and a Coke. But hold 'em for me, I gotta dash to the boy's room."



It's not all guns, guns, guns. This hairspray makes bouffant zombies flee in terror

CVG OPINION It's Resi, but not as we know it. Online play (if we get it) should be neat and there's loads of new, exciting innovation. Shame the comms system is so clunky, though. **Simon**

WE LOVE
- Team-work under scary pressure
- New moves like hide and crawl
- Unrelenting hordes of zombies!

WE HATE
- Team-mates have minus IQs
- Lack of real communication abilities
- Zombies pushing us to the end scene

* PUBLISHER
EA
* DEVELOPER
EA CANADA
* OUT:
MAY

ONLINE GAMING | x8

IN A NUTSHELL

EA's FIFA machine assimilates another part of the footballing world. 51 European teams, 2040 players, a constantly updating morale system, new gameplay features, new moves... loads of stuff.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX, PC

WWW.UK.EA.COM

Corner and free kicks use a stodgy step-by-step system that really interrupts the flow of play

So, you're English. Qualified for the European Championships and all that. Good for you. Just remember that there are millions of people in Britain who will only be watching Euro 2004 to see your boys choke.

Scottish, Welsh and Irish football fans, having failed to get through qualifying, will love it when you get knocked out. That in itself is Euro 2004's killer advantage over England International Football – rather than being stuck with England, you can take any one of 51 European nations and play through a whole Euro campaign, from friendlies to qualifying, to finals, to glory. Yes, even Scotland.

TOTALLY BANGIN' MAN

It places you firmly in the patent leathers of your national team coach. You have 40 eligible players to craft your squad from, each one subject to injuries, suspensions, and a new morale system. If a player is banging them in for his club his morale will shoot through the roof, but if you drop him or play him out of position he'll be sick as, um, some kind of tropical bird. A cockateel or something.

But Euro 2004's still primarily an on-the-pitch game. We're pleased to see that EA has actually reacted to the requests of FIFA players and not just blatted out the same game. Give-and-go passes, dummy and chip shots, diving headers, bicycle kicks, and a new Pro Evo style crossing model have all been added.

PRO E NO

Unfortunately, and we've been stifling this for about 300 words, it hasn't got Pro Evo's instinctive feel. Euro 2004 has some ten new skill moves pulled off with deft flicks of the right analog stick, but skinning a defender one-on-one is like trying to nail some squitty diarrhoea to a wall. The gameplay is frustratingly slow at times and we hate the complicated corner and free kick systems.

But you've got to hand it to EA. Euro 2004 is slick, well presented and impeccably licensed, and we'll eat our own faces (we draw the line at faeces) if it doesn't sell like really nice cakes heated up. But no matter how sweet it is to see Scotland stuff England in the final, it still doesn't capture the beautiful game like Pro Evo. *

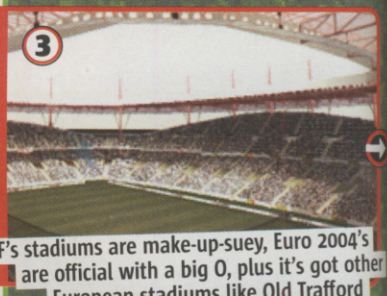
UEFA EURO 2004

TEAMS

EIF's got European and international teams but Euro 2004's got every European nation ever invented

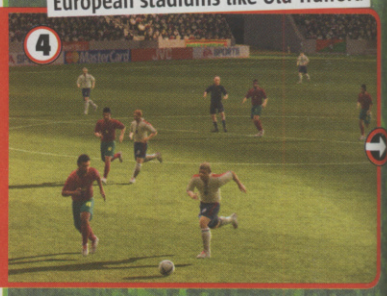
PLAYERS

STADIUMS



EIF's stadiums are make-up-suey, Euro 2004's are official with a big O, plus it's got other European stadiums like Old Trafford

GAME MODES



SKILL MOVES

In EIF you're stuck with jinking past players, but Euro 2004 has all sorts of nifty moves

5 *Like when evil Holland thumped Scotland 6-0, Euro 2004 dominates EIF in every section of the park.*

CHILLIN' & SKILLIN'

In Euro 2004 the emphasis is on skill moves. That's what EA told us. In fact, in four hours of play the most extravagant thing we saw was an accidental overhead kick.

FIFA is still much more of a slow, tactical game that favours holding up the ball over individual flair.

Right analog to trick; sidesteps change your direction quickly...

...and nutmegs make oppos look like tits. Excellent stuff!

But each skill move is like a mini cut-scene – once set in motion, you just watch. Plus defenders almost always nick the ball

Playing in real stadiums is ace. They look mint too

The player likenesses hose all over EIF

CVG OPINION Like a slinky temptress in filthy undies who beckons us away from Pro Evo. Nice additions and seductive licensing make it more than the average FIFA rehash. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- *All the official this-and-that*
- *Lovely presentation*
- *Surprisingly in-depth coach mode*

WE HATE
- *Slow, overly tactical gameplay*
- *Prefers passing over individual skills*
- *Online play's been dropped. Pants*

ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL

They're both updates of six month old games, but EIF's training regime hasn't taught it as many new tricks.

1

Goalkeepers are pretty agile but the ball pings off them at stupidly high speeds

- PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS
- DEVELOPER CODEMASTERS / KUJU
- OUT: MAY

ONLINE GAMING | x4

IN A NUTSHELL

The only game with the official England team licence, there's 31 other European teams to thump. You can stick your own talentless feet in the line-up, and it's the only football game with Xbox Live support.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX

WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/ENGLANDFOOTBALL

Imagine you're Sven Goran Ericcson. Way-hey, I boffed Ulrika Jonson! Right, move on from that thought. Imagine you're picking the England team. Up front you could play Owen and Rooney, both known talents with top-flight experience, or you could take a gamble on some duffer from the third division.

What do you do? If you succumbed to the lure of Codies' Club Football last year, then you're in the third-division duffer camp. It's not that it was THAT bad (and now that This Is Football 2004 has stunk up the park it looks much better). It's just that when you've got the likes of Pro Evo and FIFA on such rich veins of form, Club Football is definitely third choice.

EIF-FING 'ECK

Which brings us to EIF – Club Footie's equivalent of FIFA cash-in Euro 2004. Remember how Club Football had 17 different team-specific versions? This

ENGLAND
INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL

is like the 18th, only it's now wearing an England shirt. It's the one game to have the official England team licence, but we're at a loss to identify what it has that FIFA doesn't. Both games have the official kit and FIFA actually has 15 extra players eligible for the team.

And, since FIFA Euro 2004 has the official European Championship licence, you can only play an imitation of the competition. There are other leagues and cups to play in and 32 European teams to play against, but all the statistics look a bit weak compared to EA's offering.

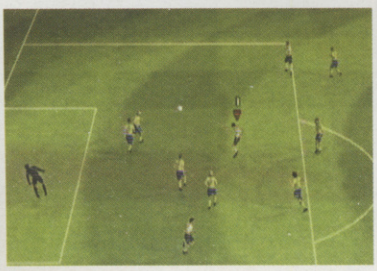
As far as the footie itself goes, nothing has changed from Club Football other than a few tweaks. The player models still look far too skinny, move jerkily, and the ball physics still feel dodgy.

DUM-DE, DUM-DUM-DE-DUM-DE

But this has England running through it's veins. There's loads of memorabilia to unlock, like video clips of some game against Germany in the Sixties, sampled crowd chants cheer on the team, and it's even got that bloody tune from The Great Escape. Note to people with trumpets - stop playing that at football games or you'll be blowing it out your arse.

At the end of the day, you have to think like Sven, and on the basis of EIF's trial, we doubt it'll be walking off with the match day jersey. ✳

Play as Scotland, but there'll be no SIF. Sniff!



This camera smacks of Pro Evo. Gameplay doesn't

GRAZZA DOES A GAZZA

One of EIF's main selling points is making a digital version of yourself (albeit one with infinitely enhanced football skills) to play alongside Beckham and the boys.

Even CVG's resident Scot couldn't resist pulling on the ol' white and red. He'll never get home alive.

Heeere's our Grazza. You get a bunch of skill points to shape your talents. Then get rid of roly-poly runt Rooney, in you go...

...and start terrorising defenders. Thing is, this ideas not new...

...so it's not something we're all that excited about. Boo-hoo

CVG OPINION

If you're English, the official team branding might bring out the bulldog in you, but EIF still can't compete with Pro Evo or FIFA for presentation or pure gameplay. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- It's English, born-and-bred
- Sven goes mental when you score
- Erm, well, hum, ahh...

WE HATE
- Still plays a poor game of footie
- Players look malnourished
- Unconvincing ball movement

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

* PUBLISHER
THQ
* DEVELOPER
GSE GAME WORLD
* OUT:
LATE 2004/ EARLY 2005

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

A beautiful, free-form survival shooter set in in an AI-controlled, radioactive wasteland. With soldiers hunting you, rivals trying to rip you off and mutants that just want to eat you – it could be a revolutionary FPS.

AVAILABLE ON

PC CD ROM

WWW.STALKER-GAME.COM

S.T.A.L.K.E.R
SHADOW OF CHERNOBYL

As you might've guessed, S.T.A.L.K.E.R. isn't a game about following Les Dennis around Tescos or camping by his house and shoving envelopes of your own vomit through his letterbox. Far from it. It's a dead exciting shooter being made in the Ukraine (which we think is below Russia and teetering on the edge of Europe) that could blow your mind up your ass, comrade.

HUMBLING HISTORY

Fact: in 1986 the world's worst nuclear accident unleashed hell in Chernobyl, with a nuclear reactor spilling out enough radioactive muck to give humans a permanent Ready Brek glow and leaving a 30-square kilometre Forbidden Zone around it – an evacuated, irradiated wasteland where towns lie rotting and military machines rust in vast vehicle graveyards. S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Shadow of Chernobyl plays out inside this zone, although in a future where a second accident in 2006 has left mutants and monsters roaming the plains.

You play as a Stalker, a guy who ventures into the Forbidden Zone to track down artefacts that have been imbued with strange powers after the second accident. It's up to you to communicate, trade, befriend and fight your rival Stalkers to get these little beauties, while still fending off a tooled-up military who don't want you there and a bunch of mutants who want to eat your legs.

The one time where French-kissing would be a bad thing...

SURVIVAL OF THE MUTANTEST

Sitting somewhere between a huge role-player like Morrowind and all-out shooter like Halo, S.T.A.L.K.E.R. should be ground-breaking 'cos, instead of just plonking baddies in the same place every time, the Forbidden Zone is a working model of a real place. Monsters go where they choose. If it's raining they'll want to find shelter. If it's night they won't be able to see so well and won't wander far. If it's windy then they might be able to smell your tasty guts from a mile off.

You can also play however you want and do whatever quest you feel like. Hell, if you can't be arsed to complete the main quests in the game then one of your rival AI Stalkers can do it instead! This has the potential of becoming one of the most free-form games EVER created.

It's also about survival. If you're tired then you'll have to find a safe place to sleep. If you're hungry and haven't got any food then you might have to shoot down a irradiated bird or pounce on a mutant rat – chowing down on these minging morsels may fill your guts with radioactive waste, but at least they keep you alive. The game will even encourage you to down a bottle of vodka to get rid of any nasty afterglow... if you're over eighteen, that is.

So it's beautiful and it's massive and it's got men with octopuses for faces, and here at CVG we're

The detail on the buildings and the rubble is unbelievable

This season, body armour and goggles are definitely in fashion

A rival Stalker. Ask nicely and you could team up. What's Ukrainian for "What a big chopper you have"?

RUSKIE REALISM

The guys at GSC Game World live down the road from Chernobyl, and they made damn sure that every residence, warehouse, farmhouse, henhouse, outhouse and doghouse in the main parts of the forbidden zone are authentically recreated.

With so many abandoned vehicles, empty houses, reactor hulks and literally hundreds of rusting military vehicles it'll make a great fighting arena.

The grim reality of nuclear meltdown. It's was pretty grim before, mind

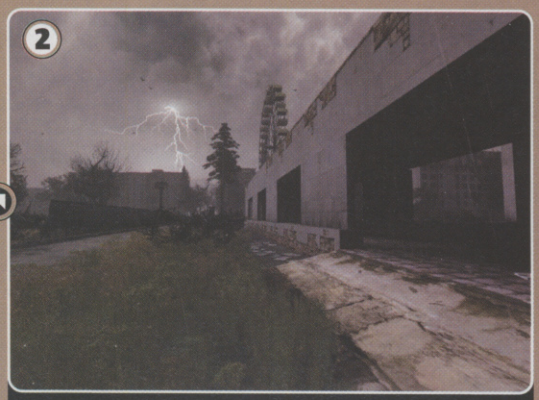
It doesn't really look much nicer here. But the graphics certainly impress

RAININ' CATS, DOGS AND MUTANTS

In S.T.A.L.K.E.R. the weather and skies change dynamically while you're playing; a bit like it does in Morrowind or even Zelda: The Wind Waker – but with a hell of a lot more realism and less cel-shading, obviously.

We still remember being blown away (literally) the first time we wandered into a duststorm in Morrowind, but when you see S.T.A.L.K.E.R.'s system in motion its abso-bloody-lutely jaw-dropping.

The sun sets on another day of swiggin' vodka, eating rats and being shot



Thunderbolts and lightning... not as very frightening as Mr Octopus Head

"Something's alive in the bog. Think I'll poo here"

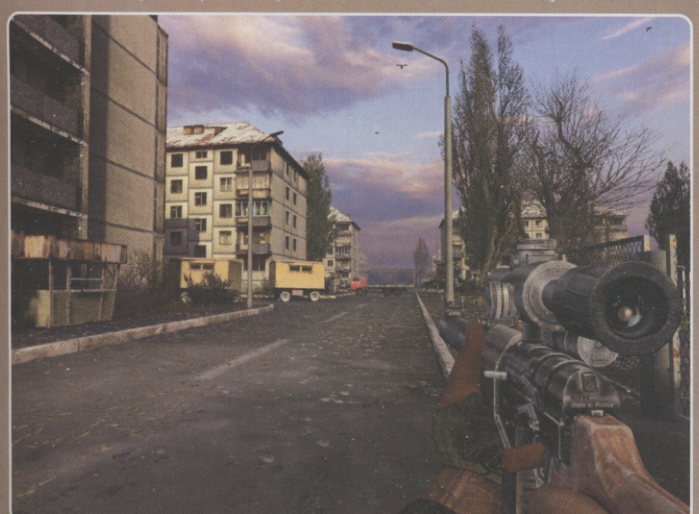
Look at the sky! Its just like real life! Only it's a game!

Enemies could be crouching anywhere in there, waiting to shoot your nads off...

ACCIDENTAL DEATH

If you're taking a brisk walk through the radioactive hellhole around Chernobyl, then be sure to take a handy anomaly detector. You start with a simple bolt for tossing at suspect areas.

Without some form of detector, chances are you'll wander into one of the many freaks of science that are scattered about the place and can crush you with their odd gravitational fields, dissolve the skin off your body and turn your flesh into a charred mess. Charming.



Weird anomalies can be anywhere, but they're invisible, so you'll need to keep a detector handy

cautiously excited. If these Ukrainian fellas do what they're promising then it could be the best shooter in ages. But if they miss the mark then we're a bit worried that the randomness could just get a bit boring. It's up in the air at the minute folks, but we'll have more news from the Forbidden Zone as soon as we can sneak back in. ✷

Hmm.. that's a handy gas canister that bloke's standing next to...

CVG OPINION A hugely exciting game that has us glowing with anticipation (and radiation). Whether GSE can pull off such a feat remains to be seen, but this could be BIIIG. **Will**

WE LOVE
- Vast, free-form play area
- Gripping survival strategies
- Authentic locations

WE HATE
- Randomness of action could flop
- Slow-moving for a shooter
- Show us more monsters!

EXCITE METER (OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...)

HARRY POTTER & THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

✷ PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS
✷ DEVELOPER ELECTRONIC ARTS
✷ OUT: 26 MAY

PS2 | XBOX PC, GC GBA

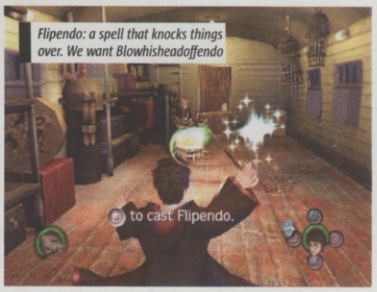
WWW.EA.COM

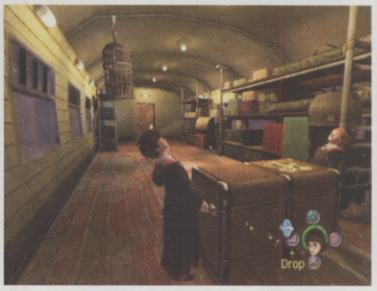
There's one good thing about school – uniforms. Girls in school uniforms. Enjoy it if you're at school, because soon you won't get to look at girls in school uniform unless you're at a crap nightclub filled with fat-legged mutts. Or you're a sick perv.

We mention school uniforms only because Azkaban sees Master Potter in his third year and undergoing blazing hormonal changes. Not only does he have to avoid getting killed by Voldemort again, but he's also got to resist the lure of Hermione in knee-highs and a skirt.

Harry's older and wiser, and so's the game. It looks lovely – the Chamber Of Secrets engine has been tarted up beyond recognition – and the gameplay's been bolstered with the ability to switch between Harry, Ron and Hermione. Even more impressive, the PS2 version includes seven EyeToy games, and the Cube version allows Tamagotchi-style Hedwig training via GBA link-up.

So yeah, it's Harry Potter, but we're impressed with the care that's gone into making this a successful addition to the series. ✷





"I'll show you mine if you show me yours. Just whatever you do Ron, don't close the lid... argh!"

WE LOVE
- Sonic Heroes-style teamwork
- Sticks to AND enriches the film plot
- Some brilliant mini-games

WE HATE
- Seems a bit too easy
- Still outdone by other platformers
- We're getting well bored of Potter

EXCITE METER (OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...)

BREAKDOWN

- PUBLISHER: EA
- DEVELOPER: NAMCO
- OUT: JUNE

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Wickedly ambitious first-person sci-fi action adventure. Brawl and you see every punch and kick land from the eyes of your character. Feels like you're in a Vin Diesel film, other times like scrapping while you're blind drunk!

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.PROJECT-BREAKDOWN.COM

UPDATE

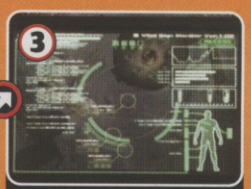
CHEESE BEFORE BEDTIME

Just to keep you on your toes and scratching your head, your mission is occasionally interrupted by strange dream-like sequences.

You lose control momentarily and crazy imagery flashes before you. There is a reason for all of this (that you will find out later) but check out some of the freak-ass stuff that happens. Weirder than one of CVG Lee's Potato-Man dreams.

1. *Your skin is peeling off! Looks like TV interference...*

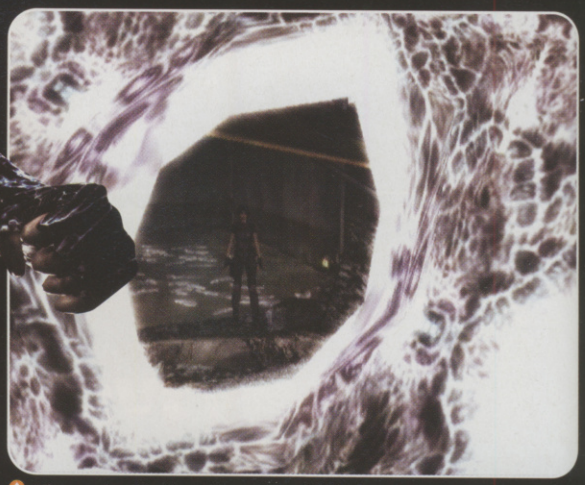
2. *This spooky cat shows up whenever something weird is happening. Harmless though*



3. *Shortly after this you learn exactly what has been going on. Then things get worse*

3. *This is either very, very good or very, very bad for you and Alex. What do you think?*

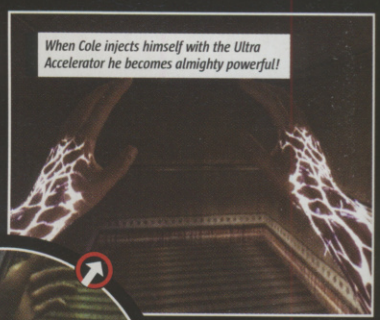
If you're low on health, search around for snacks to feel better



Aliens are invading the earth, and have left freaky portals like this everywhere

Throwing alien dudes around by their necks is some of the best fun we ever had!

Some of the dead guys are pretty horrific, but we've seen a lot worse in other games



When Cole injects himself with the Ultra Accelerator he becomes almighty powerful!

It takes moon-size balls to try a new concept in videogames, which is why we see so few of them. That's why we love Namco for having galactic guts enough to try something pretty far out on Xbox.

It helps that Breakdown has a sci-fi theme; you get away with more of the unknown. Besides, the idea itself isn't so hard to imagine, it's how it pans out: a character that fights from a first-person view, getting stuck in with commando-style unarmed combat: body blows, push-kicks, the works. Delivering this experience is Breakdown's biggest success however there could also be problems with how it affects the rest of the game.

You play as ex-US Marine, Derrick Cole, soon revealed as more than the average GI Joe. His physique is enhanced by an alien super-drug – the more he takes, the stronger he becomes. Initially Cole struggles to batter rival super-beings, but later he knocks the same dudes flying with one kick.

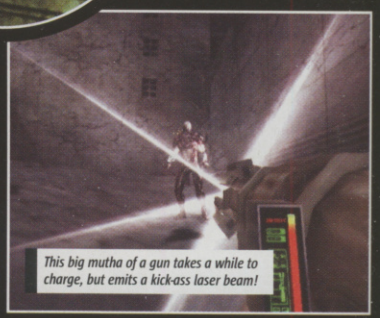
While the time-consuming aspect is exploration, the meat of Breakdown is combat. Moves are handled using L and R combined with direction and, for evasion, jump.

ON YOUR KNEES

Cole can jab, uppercut, left or right hook, kick, slide-kick, even grab hold of slender enemies to bend them over double and gut-punch them before tossing them aside. Between times he can back-flip and cartwheel to make space to line up more moves. Yes, it really does make you queasy!

But despite it being kinda disorienting at times, we like the fighting. It looks awesome, is thrilling, and a sure reason to be excited about Breakdown. We're less pleased when the 'Look, it's your very own hands' gag becomes laboured; also that the viewpoint can be confusing while doing standard tasks. Every time he picks up an item, for example, Cole examines it – EVERY time.

When clambering onto a ledge, the view bobs and weaves to show Cole's hands and feet, making you want to puke. Overall it's hard to judge distances, and the collision detection is temperamental. On balance, though, Breakdown's pros just outweigh the cons. ✷



This big mutha of a gun takes a while to charge, but emits a kick-ass laser beam!

CVG OPINION

One of the most striking games in ages, but the clever first-person element lets it down in places. Hopefully the final UK edition will iron out such problems. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- Bone-crunching baddy-battering
- Feels like you're in the body of Cole
- Clever plot with dramatic twists

WE HATE
- Some pointlessly repetitive levels
- Losing our bearings in a fight
- Graphics could be better for Xbox

SONIC ADVANCE 3

* PUBLISHER
THQ
* DEVELOPER
SEGA
* OUT:
SUMMER 2004 TBC

x4

IN A NUTSHELL

Sonic, Tails and the rest of the gang return for their third GBA outing. But there's a bunch of new stuff this time around, like a central hub-world system, and skill-mixing, tag-team action. There's even multiplayer in there.

AVAILABLE ON

GAME BOY ADVANCE

WWW.THQ.CO.UK/GAMES/PRODUCT/SONIC+ADVANCE+3?PRODPLATFORM=GBA

Classic Sonic gameplay – press Right and he's off!

Sonic can run really fast. That alone made him cool in 1990, but we've had nearly a decade and a half to get over it now. If Sega was to continue churning out the same old stuff (as it has been, some of us reckon), its blue mascot would be about as entertaining as one of his real-life cousins that's been run-over and is lying dead in the gutter.

Fortunately, Sega doesn't intend to let this happen, as our first look at Sonic's third GBA sprint-fest reveals some intriguing new features. Begin a new game and you start off in the main hub-stage where you can access the mini-hubs for each world. Only one world is open at the start. Enter and you can wander freely and access any of the four levels in that world. This means you can play the action levels of a world in any order you like, and revisit them if you want to explore the many secret areas. An old idea, but in Sonic terms it's revolutionary.

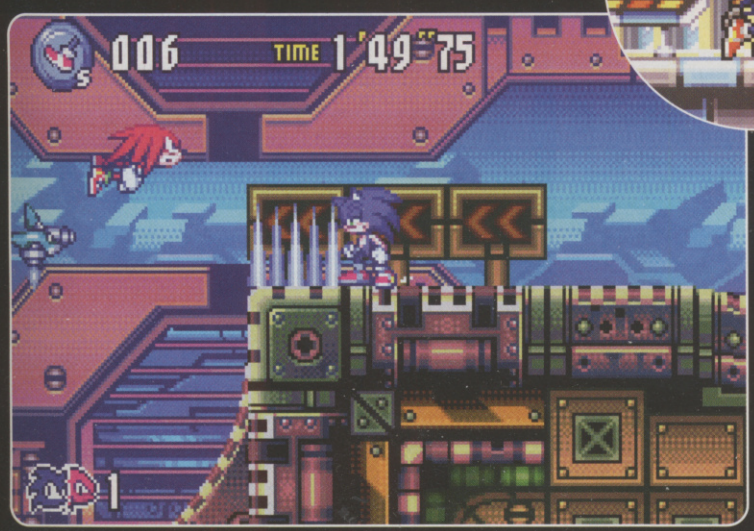
Stop for a breather underwater or Sonic'll snuff it

TAG-TEAM TACTICS

Even better, you can now choose two characters instead of one to play with, allowing you to combine abilities to take new routes through the action. Let's say you choose Sonic and Tails. Playing as Sonic, you can speed around until you reach a point where you need some extra height. Then you can call upon Tails' flying skills to carry you up to a route that would otherwise be unreachable for the grounded Hedgehog.

Once you unlock Knuckles with his ability to smash bricks and hover, and Amy's power hammer of death, there'll be plenty of skill-mixing possibilities to explore the giant worlds. Sonic nuts will be pleased to know that Cream the bunny from Sonic Advance 2 makes a return, too.

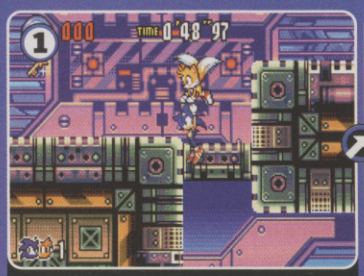
There's even a new multiplayer co-operative mode so you and a mate can work together to blister through the action stages. We'll know more about the tag-team skills, and how well the hub-levels are going to work when we get to blast through a final English version of the game. But at the moment it's looking pretty promising, and the gameplay overhaul is long overdue. *



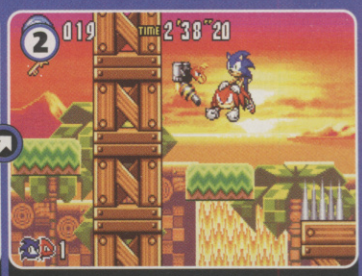
Knuckles shows off his top swimming skills. He knows he's got better hair than Duncan Goodhew as well

FRESH TALENT

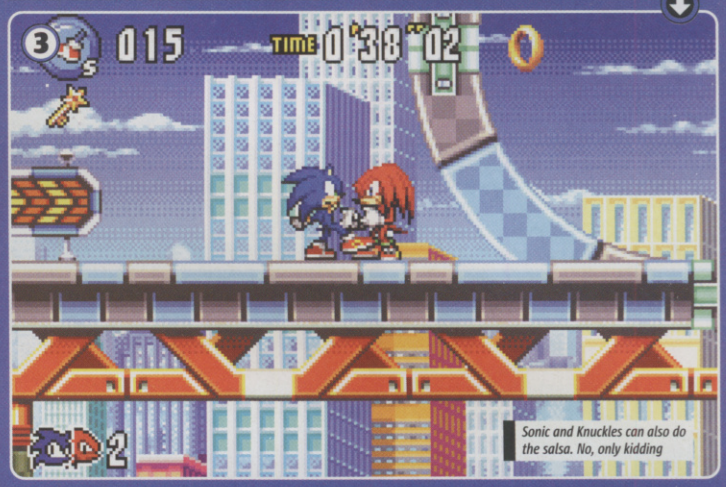
For years, all Sonic could do was run, jump and roll into a little ball, which is about as acrobatic as a one-legged donkey. Things are changing now. In Sonic Advance 3 the heroes can combine abilities to perform all sort of stunts. Take a look at some of these...



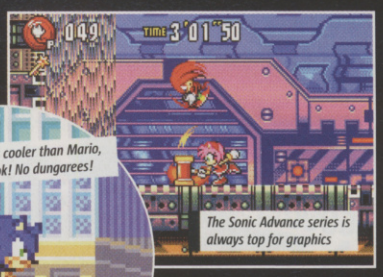
Come on my son... Tails give Sonic a helping hand to bigger, better places



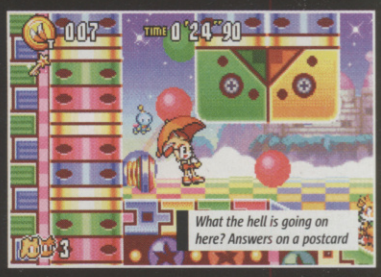
Knuckles does his gliding technique while Sonic hitches a ride. That's magic, that is



Sonic and Knuckles can also do the salsa. No, only kidding



The Sonic Advance series is always top for graphics



What the hell is going on here? Answers on a postcard

As always, Tails struggles to keep up with Sonic

Blue Chao dudes return for 'Hog-related fun

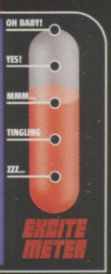
That monkey will be eating hedgehog spikes in seconds

CVG OPINION

At the moment the hub-worlds seem a little confusing but the tag-team stuff is cool. We'll know more when we get our hands on the final UK version. **Mike J**

WE LOVE
- Co-operative mode kicks ass
- The speed is still satisfying
- More routes through each level

WE HATE
- Getting lost in the hub
- AI characters lagging behind
- Basically the same Sonic action



Malice

- PUBLISHER EVOLVED
- DEVELOPER ARGONAUT
- OUT: APRIL TBC

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

We finally get a 'full-but-early' version of the troubled platformer as it nears completion. Has it got enough sparkle to battle the negative hype though? It was meant to be the jewel in the early Xbox line-up y'know...

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

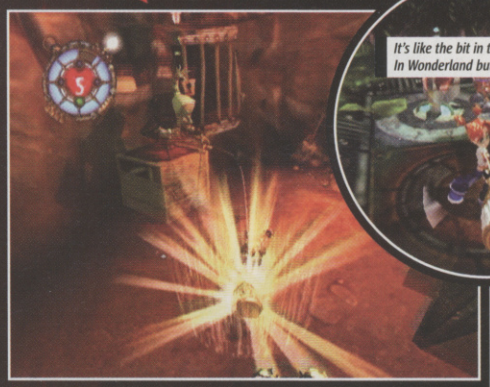
ALSO ON

PS2

WWW.ARGONAUT.COM/GAMEDISPLAY.ASP?GAMEID=MALICE

UPDATE

These fungal enemies are called butt-mushrooms and they look like saggy asses



It's like the bit in the gardens in Alice In Wonderland but with robots

Malice has two basic attacks: slash and quake. Quake's ace for leathering multiple enemies but it takes a while to charge

We remember being so impressed by this tree god in early screens. Now he just looks pants

Malice has been on-again off-again more times than J Lo's wedding plans.

Usually such delays, cancellations and resurrections can only mean one thing: no one can get the bloody thing to work. So it takes a brave publisher, possibly with gigantic mecha-balls, to take on the flame-haired vixen's dogged adventure.

WHO THE F@CK IS MALICE

In case you've forgotten/stopped caring, Malice is the mallet-wielding demi-goddess heroine who is sucked out of time and into the Orrery, the mechanical heart of the universe, to put an end to Dog God's reign of terror. *What?!*

Anyway, warping from the Orrery into lands as diverse as the toxic basin of Gloop River, a witches' hovel, ancient forgotten mines and mechanical gardens, Malice has to leap and thump her way to victory across a series of fairly generic platform game trials. In fact it's got more in common with Mario 64 and Vexx in terms of structure than the sublime open-endedness of recent platform titles.

There's no lock-on to help fight enemies but they're so dense you can't really miss

He's got a gun, you've got a hammer and a bad attitude. Who wins? You decide

The Orrery is the heart of the universe and your gateway to the twisted realms of the game

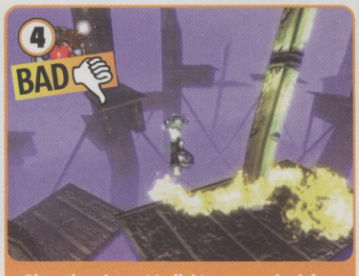
THE GOOD VS THE BAD

Not counting technical problems like stuttering frame rate and camera clipping that SHOULD be fixed for release, at the moment Malice is equal parts okay and equal parts rusty hammer up your rectum. The humour's good but most of the enemy designs stink. The same goes for many of the game's ideas...

Cancel this Firefly by combining Malice's speed and energy boost moves. It's a cool battle

The first boss is basically a couple of rank polygons thrown together and daubed pink

The gameworld is full of surprises and varied environments, like a nuts Alice In Wonderland



Die and you've got to fight your way back from the Beach Of Souls. Every. Single. Time. Argh

WE TELLS IT LIKES WE SEES IT

It's fair to say time hasn't been kind to Malice. The visuals look horrid next to Mario Sunshine and Prince Of Persia. Nor is there any of the sparkle and sheen evident in early screenshots from a few years back. The gameplay is hardly earth-shattering either, with some annoying puzzles and decidedly dodgy collision detection on enemies and the edges of platforms.

That said, the world of Malice is a quirky and original one, in terms of style and design at least. The different challenges never drag on and are replaced by a new trial to test your abilities long before you get bored. You learn eight new skills as you play, from power boosts to bursts of speed, and this should help open up the game in exciting ways.

It's just a shame it looks and, for the most part, will most likely play like exactly what it is: an old game that's seen better days before it's even released. With Prince Of Persia, Beyond Good & Evil and Jak II having already pushed the limits of what action adventure games can do, we wonder if Malice will prove simply irrelevant when it finally (EVENTUALLY!) arrives on shop shelves. ✷

CVG OPINION

There's still much spit and polish needed if it's to stand a chance against its serious competition, but it isn't quite the dog many might be expecting it to turn out. **Lee**

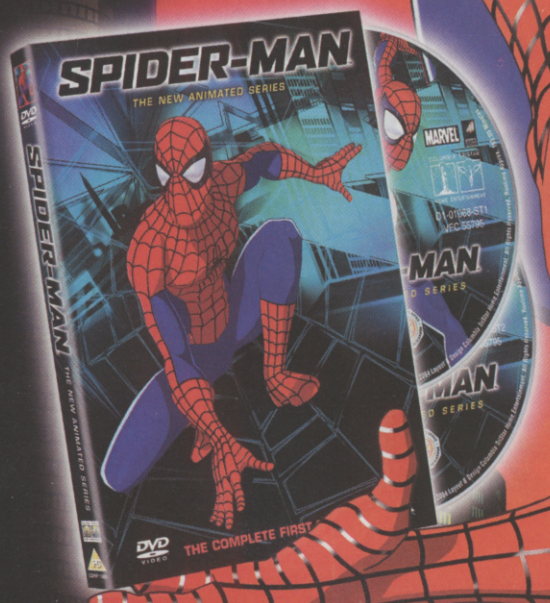
WE LOVE

- Gameworld is original and mad
- Argonaut's perseverance
- It's quite funny in places

WE HATE

- Still lots of tidying up to do
- Has a few terrible gameplay ideas
- It looks like an N64 game

Look out! Here comes the new Spider-Man



Get stuck into the latest animated Spider-Man before SPIDER-MAN 2 hits the big screen this summer

THE COMPLETE FIRST SERIES PACKED WITH SPECIAL FEATURES

COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT

NOW AVAILABLE FROM PLAY.COM MOVIES MUSIC GAMES

www.cthe.co.uk

COLUMBIA © 2004 LAYOUT AND DESIGN COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. SPIDER-MAN © SPIDER-MAN CHARACTER: TM & © 2003 MARVEL CHARACTERS INC. SPIDER-MAN THE SERIES © 2002 AGLAIA PRODUCTIONS INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Ghost Master

* PUBLISHER EMPIRE INTERACTIVE
* DEVELOPER SPIRAL HOUSE
* OUT: JUNE

PS2 XBOX

WWW.EMIREINTERACTIVE.CO.UK

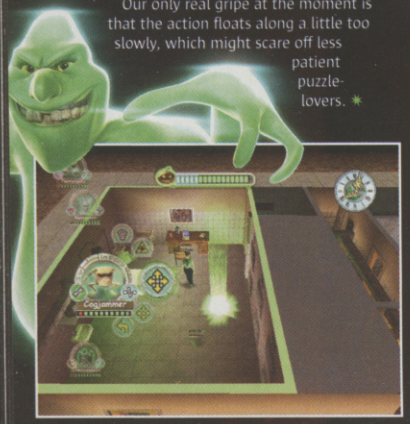
Putting the willies up a houseful of horny university girls sounds like a blast, but in Ghost Master the reality isn't quite as rude as it sounds, so tuck it away.

This supernatural real-time action puzzler urges you to use a gang of uniquely skilled spooks to solve a series of brain-tickling missions, like emptying a sorority house full of busty bookworm babes with the power of fright!

You'll need weasely cunning to coax mortals into carrying out specific tasks throughout each mission, but it's not always about scaring. You might simply need to get a mortal into a certain place to interact with a real world object; here you're best off using an Attract Ghost. However, when things start getting tough you need to juggle the various abilities of multiple ghouls in order to complete objectives.

Plus each mortal is equipped with specific skills and cursed with certain fears, so you need to exploit the hell out of these if you want to solve some of the trickier melon-twisters.

Our only real gripe at the moment is that the action floats along a little too slowly, which might scare off less patient puzzle-lovers. *



The missions in the console version are much more linear than those in the PC original

There's no disguising the fact that Ghost Master looks like a poor man's Bustin' Out

WE LOVE
- The cast of oddball phantoms
- Inventive puzzles
- Playing with our ghoulies

WE HATE
- Looks like a pony Sims game
- Clumsy controls and camera
- Slow-paced

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

MASHED

* PUBLISHER EMPIRE INTERACTIVE
* DEVELOPER SUPERSONIC
* OUT: JUNE

ONLINE GAMING x4

IN A NUTSHELL

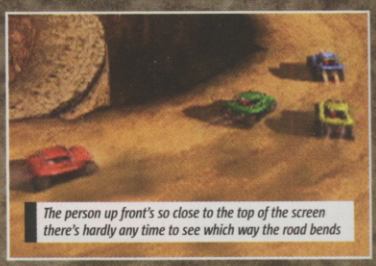
Empire's multiplayer top down thrill-seeker blends demolition derby-style driving with insane air strikes and ruthless racing. We reckon it's more of a dip-in-dip-out partier than hardcore speedster, though.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.EMPIREINTERACTIVE.CO.UK

There are coloured power-ups peppered around each course that enable you to bolt machine-guns, rocket-launchers and jet-boosters to your roof rack



The person up front's so close to the top of the screen there's hardly any time to see which way the road bends

We honestly reckoned that Mashed would be a pile of poop, but then like the well-behaved games journalists that we are, we played it... and couldn't stop!

Sure, it looks a smidge rusty around the edges, but beneath this weathered chassis sits a respectable game that kicks out a load of multiplayer fun. The handling's right on the money and the arcade rubber-ripping action is instantly addictive, thanks to the dead simple and satisfying gameplay set-up.

Up to four cars can race, but it's not all about winning just one race. You can't fluke overall victory. Each car has a gauge that gradually fills up or decreases with every race. Win and a couple of coloured blocks plop into your gauge, come second and you still get a single block, third place loses you a chunk and the biggest loser gets two blocks mercilessly stolen away. First to fill their gauge is the ultimate winner, but getting onto the podium is a nerve-mashing ride.

ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

If you drop back too far behind the leader or get taken out it's not game over. You get to call in air strikes on the remaining cars, but this requires just as much skill as the regular race-based action. You've got to hover a coloured square marker over your chosen victim for a good few seconds and wait for the square to turn into a circle. At that exact moment you can launch a guided missile to take them out! This is where things get a wee bit tactical, because it's not always about taking out the player in first place. You want to be checking who's gauge is most full to make sure they don't get any more winning blocks.

Mashed promises to be a proper long-term laugh with a bunch of mates, but the single-player stuff sent us rapidly spiralling into the murky depths of boredom due to absurdly dim AI opponents and its striking lack of play modes. Still, if you're just on the hunt for an immediate multiplayer rush, Mashed is on track to deliver. *

None of the vehicles are licensed and there are only a few types of motors to mash about in, but you can smash 'em all to pieces

The AI drivers are ridiculously forgiving. If you drop back they'll slow down and let you catch up. Patronising twats!

"Sorry Mr Bin Laden, that air strike may not have been your fault but you've stuffed your no-claims bonus"

The tracks are ultra compact and rammed with stacks of topnotch stunt spots

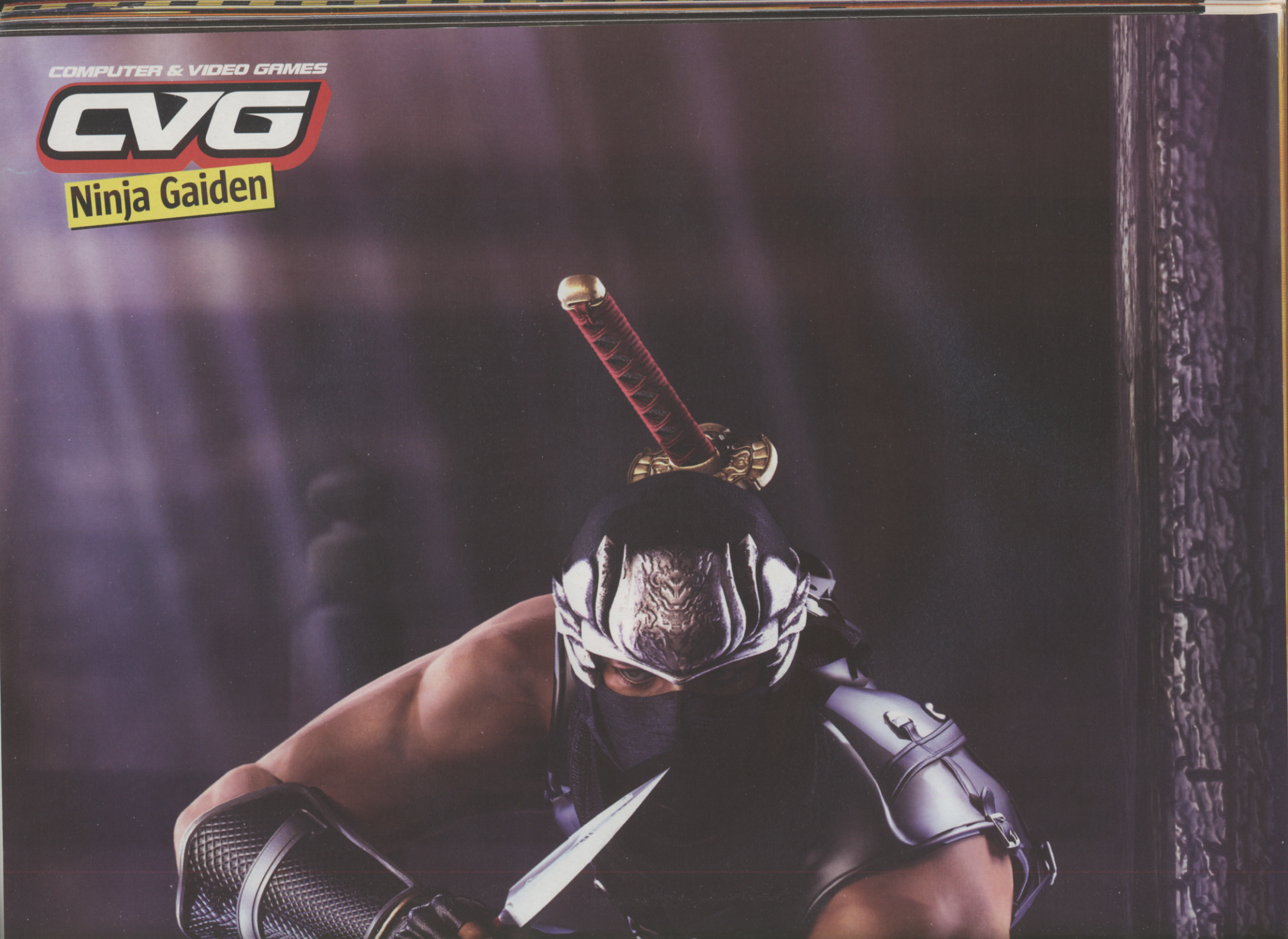
CVG OPINION

Multiplayer should keep you glued to the road for ages, but going solo could send you to sleep at the wheel. Remember, tiredness kills. As does iffy AI. **Mike**

WE LOVE
- Being spiteful and ganging up
- Nailing pinpoint air strikes
- Zipping around stacks of cool tracks

WE HATE
- The one-player action
- Weapons aren't much cop
- Other drivers. The bastards

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...


COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
CVG
Ninja Gaiden

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
CVG

Shell Shock Nam '67

"PS" and "PlayStation" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Forbidden Siren © 2004 Sony Computer entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. Developed by Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Published by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe.

PC CD

"THE GRAPHICS IN DESERT RATS ARE SENSATIONAL"

Adrenaline Vault, Feb 2004

12+ www.pegi.info

DESERT RATS VS. AFRIKA KORPS

PUTTING THE STRATEGY BACK INTO REAL TIME!
WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF RTS GAMING

DESERT RATS VS. AFRIKA KORPS DELIVERS A HISTORICAL BACKDROP, REALISTIC UNITS, VARIED AND TACTICAL MISSIONS, ALL WOVEN TOGETHER BY A UNIQUE STORYLINE. IMMERSE YOURSELF INTO ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND ADVANCED WW2 STRATEGY GAMES OF RECENT TIMES!

Digital Reality

Powered by GameSpy

Visit the official website: www.desertratsgame.com

Monte Cristo www.montecristogames.com

Digital Jesters

© 2004 Monte Cristo Multimedia. Co-published in the UK by Digital Jesters. All rights reserved. Monte Cristo and its logo are registered trademarks of Monte Cristo Multimedia. GameSpy and the "Powered by GameSpy" design are

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG COVER STORY

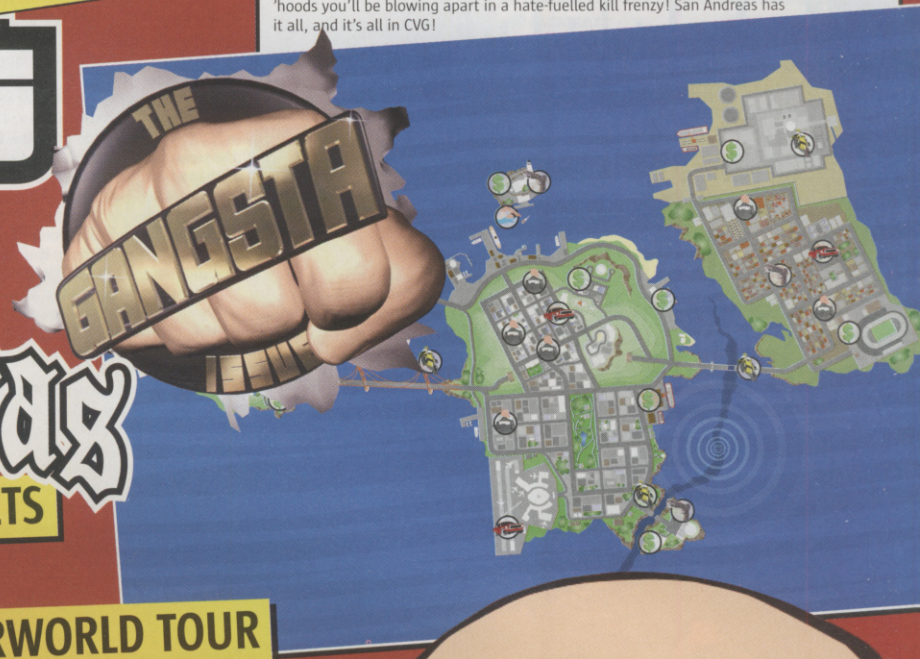
grand theft auto San Andreas

CVG HITS THE MEAN STREETS OF SAN ANDREAS TO BRING YOU THE ULTIMATE UNDERWORLD TOUR

SAN ANDREAS MAPPED! >>

We've probed the missions, characters and features of Rockstar's genius series, toured the underworld in GTA1's original city of San Andreas and pored endlessly over maps to put together what we reckon you can expect in Rockstar's newest crime capital!

You'll find out where to track down Cali's most notorious gangs and discover the 'hoods you'll be blowing apart in a hate-fuelled kill frenzy! San Andreas has it all, and it's all in CVG!



Tokyo, Bogota, Sin City... After all the red herrings, Rockstar has now announced, just like we said, that San Andreas is the lucky town to host our next fix of car-jacking and gangster-smacking.

We've torn apart every GTA game, scoured every website, and scraped every last gristly bit of GTA knowledge from the front bumpers of our brains to bring you the ultimate introduction to San Andreas.

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

Why San Andreas? The first GTA game, released back in 1997, featured three cities: Liberty City, Vice City, and San Andreas. Obviously the other two have been blown apart in GTA III and GTA: Vice City respectively. There is a real town called San Andreas in California and some magazines have wondered why Rockstar would set the new game in some unknown hick town. Dumbasses. In the first GTA San Andreas was based on San Francisco (San Andreas is the name of the fault line that runs under the city) and we guarantee this will be the case in the new game. There have been rumours that elements of LA will make an appearance, such as Hollywood's movie scene and the rampant Hispanic and black gang culture, but we reckon San Francisco's got everything Rockstar needs.

The setting is perfect for a GTA game – San Francisco is perched at the end of a mountainous peninsula, surrounded on all sides by water. There are two major areas across the water: Oakland, to the east across the Bay Bridge, and Sausalito to the north across the famous Golden Gate Bridge.

But forget the boring stuff: this isn't a geography lesson. More importantly San Francisco is one of the USA's most exciting cities. It's a melting pot of different cultures and a flashpoint for warring gangs. It has a history of rampant counter-culture and drug experimentation, and the whole Bay Area has a rich history of thumping West Coast hip-hop. The city's steep, winding streets are perfect for mental car chases and Insane Stunt Bonuses, as witnessed in movies like Bullitt and The Rock. And speaking of the Rock, how does a trip to Alcatraz, the world's most famous maximum-security jail sound?

WEST COAST STYLE

Looking for employment? Why not check out the Bloods and the Crips in Oakland for some of the fiercest black gang rivalry in the US? Or maybe head downtown to hook up with the legendary Mafia in North Beach, the vicious Triads in Chinatown and the stylishly brutal Yakuza in Japantown? El Burro of the Diablos first showed his fat face (and even fatter dong) in San Andreas – why not look him up on gay mecca Castro Street? And if that's not your style, we reckon there might be opportunities for work down in Silicon Valley, the birthplace of videogames and centre of all things hi-tech, or upstate amongst the spiritual home of hippies, potheads and acid freaks.

The possibilities are endless, and endlessly exciting. Just think about how GTA III made GTA II look like a shit-stained street hood, and how Vice City kicked GTA III to a bloody pulp and then blew off its head with a shotgun. Oh yes. San Andreas is going to be the ultimate gang-bang.

SIGN OF THE TIMES

While GTA III was present-day, Vice City was played out against a big-haired '80s backdrop. We don't have many clues for when San Andreas will be set, but here are the main contenders...

The 1960s: San Francisco emerged as a centre for youth counter-culture. The US was fighting an unpopular war in Vietnam while drug experimentation with marijuana and LSD was exploding in balls-out crazy nightclubs like The Fillmore Auditorium and the Matrix. Classic car chase movie Bullitt saw Steve McQueen launching his cool-as-funk Mustang off of the city's steep streets, and Alcatraz was still operating as a prison, making for some awesome jailbreak possibilities!

The 1970s: couple of interesting clues – Tommy Vercetti was jailed in 1971, and Vice City's football player BJ Smith says on KCHAT that he broke his leg in San Andreas in the Seventies. On top of that, there's a rumour that Rockstar has licensed up to 100 seventies songs from a record company. Groovy!

The 1990s: our money's on an early '90s setting. Why? The gothic text on the logo points to West Coast gang culture, which was at its height during the early part of the decade. This would allow loads of bangin' hip-hop and nods to gangsta movies like Boyz N The Hood and Menace II Society. And since Vice City was set in the '80s, we reckon this would bring things around nicely for next-gen GTA 4.

grand theft auto San Andreas

NORTH BAY ISLAND

Head north across the beautiful Golden Gate Bridge and take a tour of North Bay's luxurious mansions (A) for the rich and famous (B). Make enough money (and kill enough of your enemies) and maybe one day you'll have enough greens to live up here, but in the meantime why don't you take a PCJ-500 motorbike down to the Bridge and scale the suspension cables (C)? It's San Andreas' best rush, and you'll love the Insane Stunt Bonus!

To get you closer to that house in the hills, why don't you hook up with the hippies that congregate around the wooded hillsides (D)? Yeah, they smell like cowshit, but they sure know how to grow some truly skank weed and brew up some premium head-screwing LSD. So they might even have some jobs if you're a more environmentally -minded gangster (E).

And for some fun with sailors (ooer!), why not mosey on over to the Naval base? If you ask nicely enough (preferably let the barrel of an M16 do the talking), they might even let you have a go on one of their gunboats, attack helicopters or fighter jets (F)?

GANGSTA-BANGIN'

Uncle Fu's on old man, but don't cross him

There are two gang leaders we'll put our money on being in San Andreas: Uncle Fu of the Triads (G) and El Burro of the Diablos (H). When you travelled to San Andreas in the original game you worked jobs for venerable and ancient Uncle Fu, and, since San Francisco has a busy Chinatown area and a huge Asian population, we reckon he'll will be making a comeback. Expect to collect extortion money from restaurants and launderettes, perform ritual assassinations on hoods who dishonour the way of the Triad, and generally turn other gangs into stir-fried chop-suey. Hi-yah!

The other gangster we're sure will show up is El Burro, who also appeared in GTA III. He's a Hispanic geezer with a legendarily huge nob (hence the name – El Burro means The Donkey in Spanish). He's the leader of the Diablos (check out the tattoo on his stomach – it's the same font used in the San Andreas logo!), a part-time porn star, and judging by his come-ons in the first GTA, a homosexual. Happily, San Francisco has a huge gay population centered around Castro Street, so El will feel right at home. Even cooler, El Burro showed a crazy hatred for the Triads in GTA III, so the scene could be set for a huge Hispanic versus Chinese gang battle!

DOWNTOWN SAN ANDREAS

This is where the real action happens. Set against a rugged landscape of steep inclines and constantly under threat of getting shaken to shit by the local earthquake fault line, Downtown San Andreas is a haven of expensive commercial areas (I), close-knit ethnic districts and hi-tech industries (J). Check out Chinatown or Japantown (K) for some Asian gang action, swing by North Beach (L) to hook up with the Mafia, or head down to the city's gay quarter and track down El Burro cruising the bars.

You wanna make money? You're in the right place. Take a ride on one of San Andreas' tram cars (M) to the wharfs and marinas that scatter the shoreline for some of the primest real estate in the city (N). Or why not just nick a private jet for business down in Silicon Valley (O)? Since it's the birthplace of videogames, we're sure you'll find something to help bring in the bucks... how about your own ultra-violent game franchise (P)?

Fancy a day-trip? Nip across the water to Alcatraz, the world's favourite island penitentiary (Q). Bust someone out if you feel like it (R), but remember: no-one has ever escaped from Alcatraz alive. And if you're looking for the ultimate car chase thrills, Downtown's steep and winding streets offer the chance to grab maximum Bullitt-style airtime (S). Sure, you'll kill your shocks when you FINALLY land, but at least you'll lose the cops...

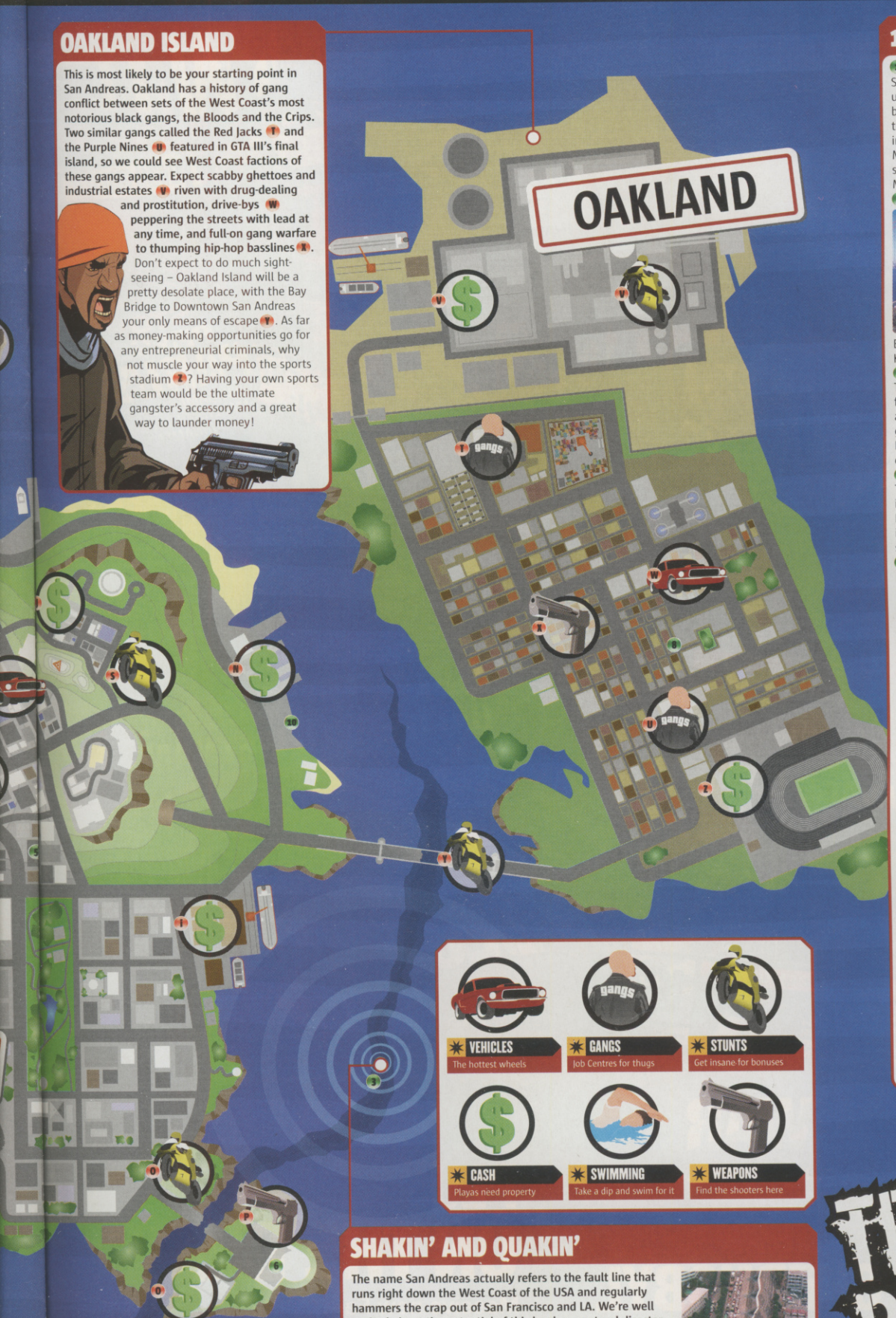
Don't be fooled – this screenshot is a Net fake

The Chinatown Gate is the entrance to Triad turf

OAKLAND ISLAND

This is most likely to be your starting point in San Andreas. Oakland has a history of gang conflict between sets of the West Coast's most notorious black gangs, the Bloods and the Crips. Two similar gangs called the Red Jacks (T) and the Purple Nines (U) featured in GTA III's final island, so we could see West Coast factions of these gangs appear. Expect scabby ghettoes and industrial estates (V) riven with drug-dealing and prostitution, drive-bys (W) peppering the streets with lead at any time, and full-on gang warfare to thumping hip-hop basslines (X).

Don't expect to do much sightseeing – Oakland Island will be a pretty desolate place, with the Bay Bridge to Downtown San Andreas your only means of escape (Y). As far as money-making opportunities go for any entrepreneurial criminals, why not muscle your way into the sports stadium (Z)? Having your own sports team would be the ultimate gangster's accessory and a great way to launder money!



VEHICLES – The hottest wheels

GANGS – Job Centres for thugs

STUNTS – Get insane for bonuses

CASH – Playas need property

SWIMMING – Take a dip and swim for it

WEAPONS – Find the shooters here

SHAKIN' AND QUAKIN'

The name San Andreas actually refers to the fault line that runs right down the West Coast of the USA and regularly hammers the crap out of San Francisco and LA. We're well excited about the potential of this hardcore natural disaster in a GTA game.

We reckon you could be isolated on the first island by earthquake damage to the Oakland Bay Bridge, and a huge chasm ripped out of Downtown San Andreas could provide some wicked Insane Stunt jumps. And how about this for a climax to the game? Imagine you're driving around, taking care of business and popping your enemies, when the whole world comes down around you. Literally. A massive earthquake is shaking the city, destroying whole neighbourhoods and causing huge riots! It could be one of the coolest set-pieces ever and result in an epic finale to the game!

10 THINGS YOU GOTTA SEE

1 ALCATRAZ

Sure to be the scene for some ultra violence, imagine busting out a pal (or yourself!) then screaming across the bay in a speedboat to safety. Might even involve a new stealth feature blagged from Manhunt.

2 GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

One of the most famous bridges in the world and the perfect place for a huge car chase, especially with GTA's already-perfect handling. Remember that massive jump over a line of traffic in Gone In 60 Seconds? The stunt potential off the Golden Gate Bridge's suspension cables is enough to stiffen Evel Knievel's suspension strut.

3 FAULT LINE

The San Andreas fault line's been saving up its energy for the Big One for years. Picture this – you're going about your crime business when it all goes off, the city gets shaken apart, riots erupt (remember State Of Emergency?!), and the whole complexion of the game changes, kinda like Tony Hawk's 3 but miles better!

4 STEEP, TWISTY STREETS

The steepest street in the world lives in San Francisco: it's got eight switchback turns on a slope of 40 degrees. Double the steepest bits of NFS: Underground and imagine gunning your growling Mustang down these slaloms – it'd be the ultimate GTA driving thrill!

5 DOWNTOWN

Malls, boutiques, restaurants, streetside cafes, tourist-rammed wharfs and marinas chock-full of fancy boats. It's the perfect place for some senseless Kill Frenzies or a spot of top-of-the-range car-jacking.

6 SILICON VALLEY

The whole Bay area is a hotbed of electronic entertainment. Atari, the company who essentially started the videogame business, were founded here and EA have their offices in the area. And they're all run by nerds. It's your GTA duty to give them a wedgie and steal their wonga.

7 NORTH BAY

For the more discerning crime overlord, North Bay offers exquisite multi-million dollar mansions with views over the bay. The area's bothered by stinking hippies and sailors from the Naval Base, but that's nothing the bang-bang end of a sawn-off can't fix.

8 OAKLAND ISLAND

Take the Bay Bridge (watch for earthquake damage) to Oakland. Just keep your doors locked: you'll be the target in these 'hoods. Unless you earn yourself some juice with the gangs, that is.

9 NAVAL BASE

It's not much to look at but San Andreas' Naval Base is THE place to go if you're after heavy-grade military ordinance. 'Copter gunships. Fighter jets. Battleships!

10 FISHERMAN'S WHARF

Popular with the tourists, but still a functioning fresh fish market. Which means it smells like a dead cat's arsehole, but you could run some money-laundering operations out of here. And all that ice might come in handy when you've got bodies to get rid of...

TEXT 2 B HEARD
TEXT YOUR MAIL TO: 83125
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREA
How? First type 'CVG GTA', leave a space, and then out your idea. E.g: 'CVG GTA I WANT TO SWIM'
TEXTS COST 50P PLUS YOUR STANDARD OPERATOR CH
FOR FULL TERMS AND CONDITIONS SEE PA

OUT NOW!
THE FIRST AND BEST FOR PC GAMES
ISS 141 MAY 2004 £5.99
PCZONE
ROME: TOTAL WAR
The greatest strategy game of all time!
STOP PRESS! PARIAH
NEW GAME FROM THE MAKERS OF UNREAL TOURNAMENT!
STALKER: SHADOW OF CHERNOBYL
The FPS mutates... Join the revolution inside!
DEFINITIVE REVIEWS!
SPLINTER CELL 2
BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM
PLUS...
BLUE VAULT
World's first look at the sci-fi epic from the makers of Republic
DVDZONE
TWICE THE CONTENT OF ANY OTHER PC GAMES MAG!
NEW DEMO!
FARCRY
EXCLUSIVE!
MEET THE MUTANTS! NEW LEVEL OF CRYTEK'S STUNNING TROPICAL SHOOTER!
PCZONE CLASSIC
EXCLUSIVE!
KILL.SWITCH
HIDE AND SEEK! FULL PLAYABLE DEMO OF NAMCO'S ACTION-PACKED 3D BLASTER!
DESERT RATS VS AFRIKA KORPS
EXCLUSIVE!
SAND STORM! CAPTURE THE FLAGS FOR KING AND COUNTRY IN THIS MULTIPLAYER DEMO
SPELLFORCE
DEMONIC! PLAY THREE LEVELS OF THIS DEVILISH RTS
SAVAGE
EXCLUSIVE!
BESTIAL! TWO GREAT MAPS OF THE MAN VERSUS BEAST FPS/RTS HYBRID!
BLACK & WHITE 2
EXCLUSIVE MOOVIE & MUSIC!
ANIMAL MAGIC! LIONHEAD'S LATEST IN ACTION!
BEYOND DIVINITY
EXCLUSIVE!
GOD-GIVEN! DUNGEON LEVEL OF THIS HEAVENLY ROLE-PLAYING GAME
THE ESSENTIAL SELECTION
ALL THE PATCHES AND DRIVERS YOU NEED, PLUS THE 10 BEST PLAYABLE DEMOS INCLUDING... FAR CRY, X2: THE THREAT, PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME, COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04, UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2004 & FIVE MODS OF THE MONTH.
PLUS PLAYABLE DEMOS OF...
GANGLAND WARLORDS BATTLECRY III WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL 2004 CASTLE STRIKE AIM CAT IN THE HAT SONIC ADVENTURE DX COLISEUM HOMEWORLD MAZIACS
16+
www.pegi.info
www.pczone.co.uk
TINY COMPO:
9 771471 753016 05
ISSUE 141 MAY 2004 £5.99
ROME: TOTAL WAR
World exclusive preview of the stunning strategy epic!
STALKER: SHADOW OF CHERNOBYL
Exclusive screenshots from the radioactive shooter!
BLUE VAULT
World's first look at the new RTS from the makers of Republic: The Revolution!
PLUS – ON THE DISCS!
Massive new Far Cry playable demo
Exclusive kill.switch & Desert Rats Vs Afrika Korps playable demos
Black & White 2 – unmissable exclusive movie and music!
All this and much, much more!

TEXT TO WIN

TEXT YOUR ANSWERS TO: **83125**
(SAME FOR T-MOBILE USERS)

How to enter: first type 'CVG CRYSTAL' and then the letter matching your answer. Eg: 'CVG CRYSTAL B'*

*TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

ALL YOUR CRYSTAL CHRONICLES FANTASIES FULFILLED!

ANOTHER PRICELESS CVG PRIZE!

Scoop unique Crystal Chronicles gear, live happily ever after!

To the less enlightened members of Team CVG, role-playing games are for greasy-skinned loners who can't play football and smell like Cheese Wotsits. This, of course, is not true.

Sure, you can enjoy the RPG goodness of Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles on your lonesome, wallowing in a darkened pit of clammy odours and filthy fantasies about levelling-up inside Queen Bonnienorks of Nagarath, but you can also hook up with your mates for a full-on RPG foursome! It's all the best bits of Final Fantasy with the added f[un] of pinging your pal's ears and working as a finely-tuned hack 'n slash team.

That's why we've got together with Nintendo to offer you the chance to win some top drawer Crystal Chronicles booty, including a 100% unique poster signed by Producer Akitoshi Kawazu himself! So come on, answer the question, send or text it in, and prepare yourself for the ultimate Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles experience! ✷

WIN ALL THIS!

One dead spawny winner gets a GameCube, two GBA SPs with two Link Cables, a copy of the game itself, plus a unique Crystal Chronicles poster autographed by the game's Producer! Two runners-up blag a Cube and copy of the game each, while two more runners-up walk off with a copy of the game apiece. Holy Magicite! That lot is guaranteed to get you a hot girlfriend who wears miniskirts and high heels. Okay, maybe not, but it's damn cool booty!

THE PRIZES
First prize is a Cube, two GBAs, two Link Cables, copy of CC and poster. Two runners up get a Cube and copy of the game, two more get the game!

TO WIN: ARE YOU A CRYSTAL CHRONICLES TEAM PLAYER?

To turn your bedroom into a righteous haven of RPG co-operation, all you have to do is take a squiz at the three screenshots and tell us which one shows a four-player Final Fantasy brotherhood saving the world. It's a bit easy this, isn't it?

A

This is what happens when you don't work as a team – a massive plant-thing eats you

B

Chatting up girls might get you your jollies, but it won't save the world. And she's probably a slapper

C

But joining forces with your mates in an orgy of honourable companionship enriches us all

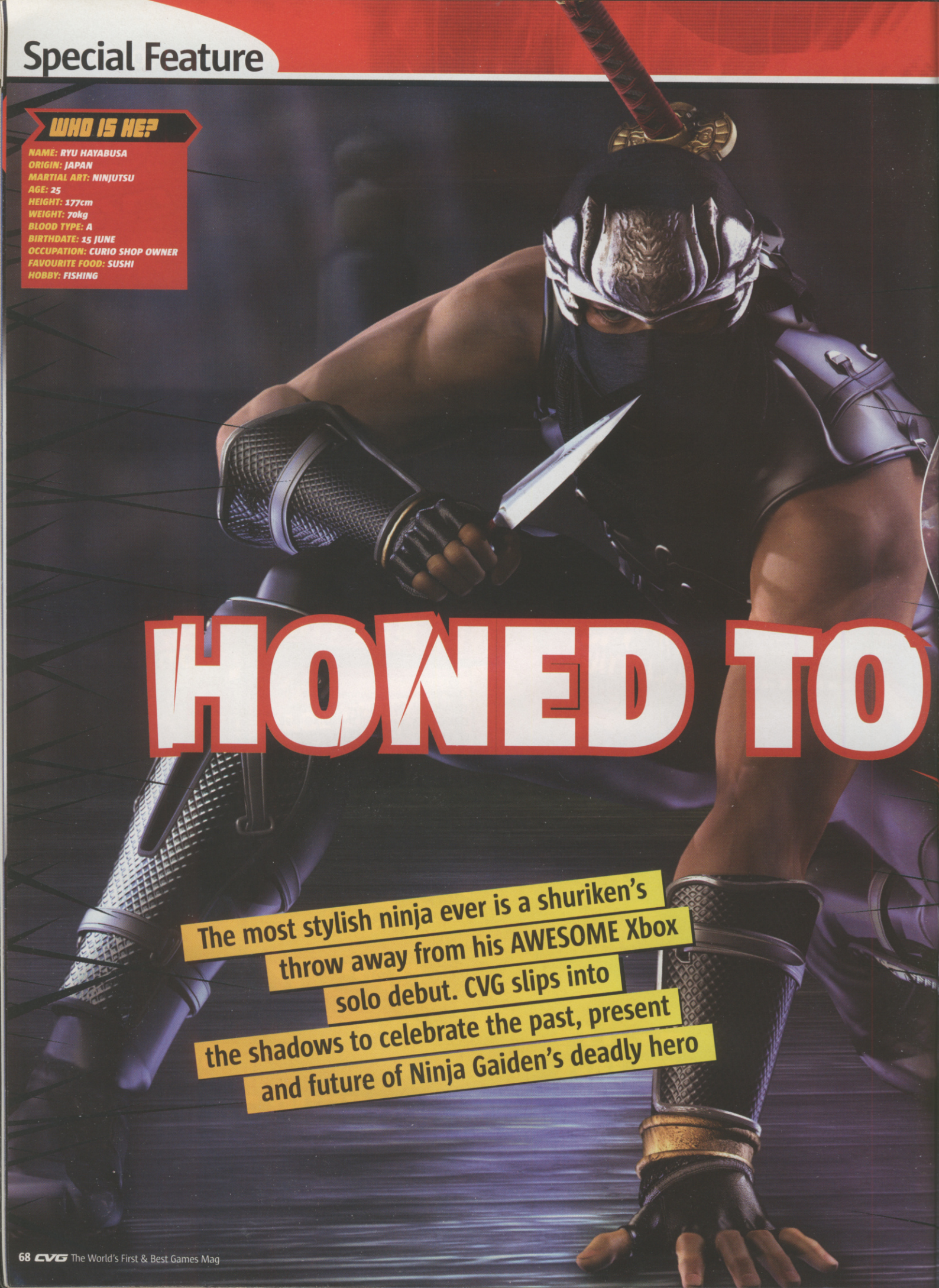
YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT
Tick one of the following boxes
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐

★TITLE: .....
★FORENAME: .....
★SURNAME: .....
★ADDRESS: .....
.....
★POSTCODE: .....
★DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: .....
★EMAIL: .....

Send you entries to: Computer And Video Games, CCVG405A, Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford, BD1 5RZ

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Please indicate clearly on your entry if you are a current subscriber to the magazine. Your details will be processed by Dennis Publishing Ltd (publishers of CVG magazine) and our suppliers in full accordance with UK data protection legislation. Dennis Publishing Ltd may contact you with information about our other products and services. Please tick if you prefer NOT to receive such information by post [ ] email [ ]phone [ ] mobile phone messaging [ ]. Dennis Publishing Ltd occasionally shares data, on a secure basis, with other reputable companies who wish to contact you with information about their products and services. Please tick if you prefer NOT to receive such information by post [ ] phone [ ]. Please tick if you DO wish to receive such information by email [ ] mobile phone messaging [ ]. Closing date: May 5 2004

TEXTING TERMS AND CONDITIONS: In order to interact with CVG text services the user should send the keyword and response to 83125. Misspelled voting keywords will not be counted. All entries must be received by May 5, 2004 Dennis publishing will not be liable for any delays in the receipt of any SMS messages as delivery is subject to effective transmission from your network operator. Messages sent to CVG will be charged at your standard operator rate The message to confirm the interaction has been received and counted will be charged at 25p Upon closure of campaigns Dennis Publishing will have no further obligation thereafter to forward any unread or unsent messages to user or any other party. By replying Yes, the user agrees to receive further text messages from CVG and other Dennis Publications regarding future services and promotions, as well as market research run or conducted by Dennis Publishing and other related or associated businesses. The user can unsubscribe at any time by replying 'STOP' to any message received.



WHO IS HE?

NAME: RYU HAYABUSA
ORIGIN: JAPAN
MARTIAL ART: NINJUTSU
AGE: 25
HEIGHT: 177cm
WEIGHT: 70kg
BLOOD TYPE: A
BIRTHDATE: 15 JUNE
OCCUPATION: CURIO SHOP OWNER
FAVOURITE FOOD: SUSHI
HOBBY: FISHING

HONED TO

The most stylish ninja ever is a shuriken's throw away from his AWESOME Xbox solo debut. CVG slips into the shadows to celebrate the past, present and future of Ninja Gaiden's deadly hero

PERFECTION

TECMO'S KICK-ASS NINJA BEGAN FLITTING ABOUT THE SHADOWS IN THE LATE '80S...

When Ryu Hayabusa first back-flipped into view, some of the old, old guys on CVG remember queuing to play "The one with the guy swinging on the poles". It was 1988, the year after Sega's ninja epic Shinobi proved that shuriken and 'ninpo' magic were way cooler than dudes with crowbars and baseball bats. What impressed about Ninja Gaiden, and what makes it outstanding now, is the Ryu's breathtaking acrobatic approach to fighting.

Ninja Gaiden was a style-hardy attack on the left-to-right scrolling beat 'em up. Compared to Ryu Hayabusa's gymnastic display, Shinobi's Joe Higashi made like a hunchback with haemorrhoids. Ryu could run up walls, and hurl enemies by the neck against walls to finish a combo. It was a truly spectacular display, plus it had the goriest Continue screen ever!

The visual styling of the new Ninja Gaiden has come a long way since side-scrolling days

FLASH IF YOU LOVE NINJAS

The timing was perfect for Ryu to become a household name the world over. Nintendo's NES was the PlayStation of its day, and in 1989 Tecmo made NES Ninja Gaiden, surpassing the arcade version in every way. This was ninja action like you couldn't believe, with Ryu clambering and swinging all over the joint on a psuedo-3D background. It was so hot that it spawned numerous sequels across early games consoles, including Game Boy and retro favourites Game Gear and Atari Lynx. The emphasis was on Ryu as the ultimate action adventurer, bringing ninja smarts to urban environments, versus a succession of evil masterminds and their freak-ass armies.

THE TEMPERED BLADE

As mysteriously as he had arrived, Ryu went into hiding after Ninja Gaiden III. A 're-mastered' Ninja Gaiden Trilogy launched in 1995 for Super NES, but Hayabusa's true rebirth came as a real surprise in the first of another groundbreaking Tecmo series. Stripped of any responsibilities to save the world from destruction, Ryu's only duty was to fight and emerge Dead or Alive...

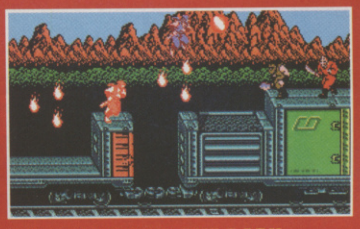
NINJA GAIDEN – THE BEGINNING

NINJA GAIDEN (1988)

■ *Ryu's Flying Body Toss and Phoenix Backflip make their debut. The game took its lead from the street brawlers of the time, including an option to go two-up with a friend (whose ninja wore red instead of blue). Responsible for eating up a lot of CVG coinage all those years back.*
CHECK IT OUT: Arcade PCB

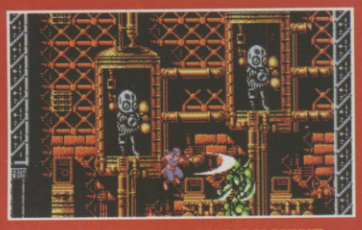
NINJA GAIDEN (1989)

■ *This was also known as Shadow Warriors in Europe. It took the great action of the arcade game and developed it for a home-console adventure. Ninja Gaiden was very cinematic for its time (no, honestly), and had plenty of cut-scenes telling the story.*
CHECK IT OUT: NES, Super NES



NINJA GAIDEN II: THE DARK SWORD OF CHAOS (1990)

■ *Said Dark Sword must be captured, as it is forged from the bones of the demon Ryu killed and entombed in the first adventure. Nothing has changed much in terms of gameplay, but the adventure is spectacular – if a little easier.*
CHECK IT OUT: NES, Super NES



NINJA GAIDEN III: THE ANCIENT SHIP OF DOOM (1991)

■ *Vertically scrolling levels helped revitalise the series, but fans were disappointed by the overpowering sci-fi element to the theme. It allowed for seriously gigantic sprites though, and Ryu needed to upgrade his sword to defeat them!*
CHECK IT OUT: NES, Super NES

Again, with attitude literally dripping from every pore, Tecmo's Dead Or Alive bounced into the fray of 3D fighters in '96 with bootilicious babes and a pack of almighty hombres. Among them, a treat for the fans, Ninja Gaiden's Ryu Hayabusa!

We always knew Ryu was kick-ass, and the kind of stuff he was doing in DoA was just like we imagined it to be in Ninja Gaiden. His neck throw and backbreaker joined new techniques such as the infamous Izuna Drop. Ryu was, and is, awesome in the DoA series with the ultimate crowd-pleasing moves.

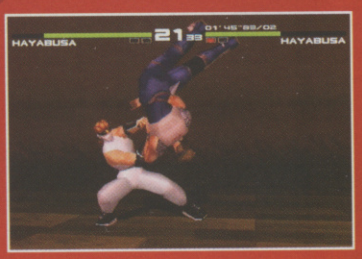
ONE MAN ARMY

In DoA we adapted to think like Ryu, surviving one-on-one confrontations with similarly well-equipped foes. This was much more satisfying than slaying legions of katana fodder in the Ninja Gaiden adventures. Ryu's appeal in DoA is all down to his techniques – you can forget about the story. As with any one-on-one fighter, the game is purely mastering defensive or offensive moves at lightning speed against advanced AI opponents, or skilled humans for the ultimate challenge.

No matter how incredible DOA'S supporting cast is, the appeal of the deadly recluse committed to his art of Ninjutsu remains supreme. As Tecmo pushed the boundaries of 3D fighting, with flowing counter-moves and later with acrobatic tag-team pyrotechnics, Ryu's depth and range as a character developed too.

SILENT ASSASSIN

The breakthrough for DoA2 were attacks that came from an opponent's side, as well as to front and back. We also got back walls to embellish specialist combos, recalling more of Ryu's trademark Gaiden antics. By the time DoA3 hit Xbox in 2002, we had a version of Ryu to die for, and environments that allowed battles to range across many varied surfaces. The opportunity to test Hayabusa within a vast and treacherous world was too good to miss...



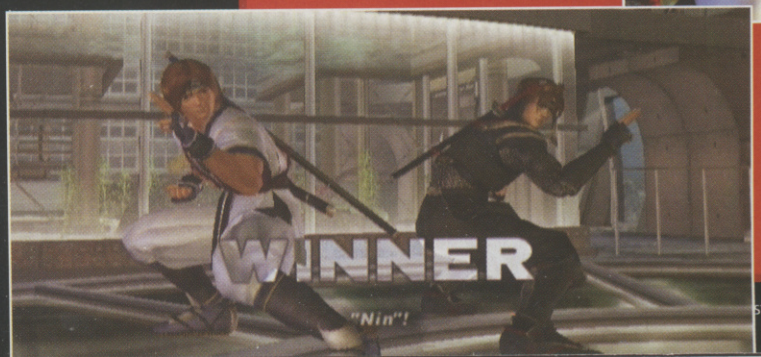
DEAD OR ALIVE

DEAD OR ALIVE (1997)

■ *There were no walls to have fun with in Dead or Alive, but Ryu and chums could chuck each other onto 'Danger Zones', providing explosive climaxes to their combos. We discover that Ryu enjoys fishing and owns a curio shop...!*
CHECK IT OUT: Sega Saturn, PlayStation, Arcade PCB

DEAD OR ALIVE 2 (1999)

■ *Ryu feels right at home with the addition of walls to smack foes into or run up to frustrate opponents. There appears to be some sort of romance blooming between Ryu and Kasumi, but that's probably our imagination...*
CHECK IT OUT: PlayStation 2, Sega Dreamcast



DEAD OR ALIVE 3 (2001)

■ *Ryu gives up chasing Kasumi, and commits himself to saving the world from the demonic Genra. He achieves this by kicking the crap out of everyone, including Kasumi, in the DoA tournament before a psychedelic duel with Genra himself!*
CHECK IT OUT: Xbox

2004: THE SAGA CONTINUES

While our ninja-buddy Ryu was off trading blows with soldiers and babes with big boobies, there has been a revival of the serious action adventure. More significantly, action adventures with smouldering, sword-wielding Japanese swordsmen. Samanosuke's Onimusha series is just awesome. Sam is no ninja, but his sword skills are damn special, plus he uses magic. Then there is Riki Maru of Tenchu, a very worthy ninja who is more agile than Samanosuke, but kinda straight-laced.

We were wondering if Onimusha and Tenchu are the best we can expect. After the opening half-hour of Ninja Gaiden, we realise the answer is NO! Ryu Hayabusa has made a spectacular return in a seriously H-U-G-E quest, during which he applies his trademark acrobatic finesse to cut down titanium-tough enemies. If you're big into Dead or Alive, you'll shriek at the brilliance of Ryu here. The number of ways he has to get around alongside a huge repertoire of ninja combat skills will leave you breathless.

We take Ninja Gaiden's enemies dead seriously. Woo, nice butt!

THE ULTIMATE NINJA

Once again, Ryu is distinctive as the go-getting, acrobatic hero with ninja cool. Ninja Gaiden is primarily a showcase for Ryu's talents, and a constant test of your skill to master them. It's never boring because Ryu's abilities evolve throughout the game, and very few of them are optional – you really will need all your wits about you to survive. And although we have here a ninja famous for stealth, Ryu wants nothing to do with that.

For the sake of structure and a story, there are minor puzzles to solve, usually along the lines of item retrieval, plus there are secret locations to be uncovered which may sometimes be a shortcut.

Armoured guards pack a machine-gun alongside an electric-charged katana

Sometimes, Ninja Gaiden even seems to share similarities both with Metroid and Zelda from Nintendo!

It takes around 20 hours to finish the whole thing – and that's when you actually know what you're doing, and also assumes you can hold your own as Ryu against enemies with ridiculously tricky AI.

Ryu's shreds are slick. We wanted some but the Ninja Surplus Shop only had 'em in pink

THE TOUGHEST OF OUR TIME

We should also warn you that Ninja Gaiden pulls no punches in battle. Even the lowliest of minions puts up a strong fight – and they've got smarts too. Tecmo clearly wants us to savour every second of battles, avoiding the temptation to flood the screen with bodies just for effect, opting for fewer but deadlier assassins instead.

Each enemy type has a tricky range of moves that will catch you unawares, slitting Ryu's throat or sheathing a blade to reach for a rifle. Stuff like that is intimidating, but even when you're dying you are in awe. All of which keeps you on the edge of your seat because you're

AWESOME NINJA SKILLS

WALL RUNNING Run along walls to avoid danger, or simply save time instead of jumping around

BLOCK HEAD Ryu can block indefinitely, but if he's backed into a corner the enemy gangs up on him

FLOOR STABBA Spiking them when they're down is one of the classiest finishing moves available!

COUNTER TWO-III-ONE With practice you can take out more than one guy with a well-timed counter-attack

BIG KICKER Ryu's attacks that come immediately after a Counter are many times more powerful!

RANGED ATTACKS Enemies are deadly up close so keep them at bay with arrows. Use sparingly though

FIRST-PERSON MODE Projectile weapons can be fired from a first-person view, but aiming is kinda slow

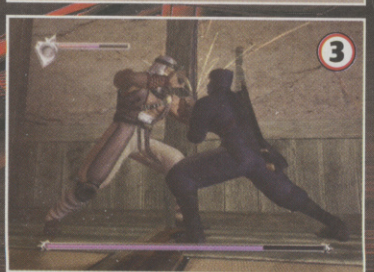
THEY'RE BIG AND THEY'RE CLEVER

Boss battles in Ninja Gaiden are so tough they'll mentally scar you for life – in a good way! The game abides by the old but rewarding philosophy of Learning The Hard Way.

Bosses are easily on par with the final battle against Genra in Dead or Alive 3. In fact, imagine the toughest encounters in Resident Evil or maybe Onimusha, and then imagine them speeded up around ten times, with ten times the techniques required just to survive!

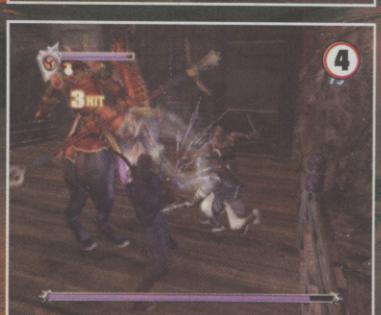
However, these truly are moments to die for and are incredibly rewarding, and you'll find yourself babbling to your mates afterwards about just how you struggled through like an old war hero.

NO NUN-SENSE!



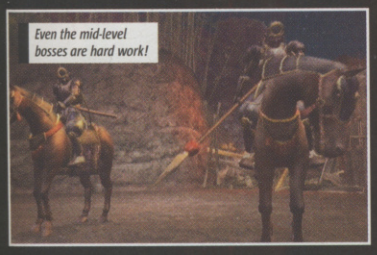
Ryu's first big challenge is against a nunchaku master, who only wants to test Ryu's mettle before teaching him some tricks. He'll counter your best moves, and charge right through Ryu like he's not there. The coolest moment is when he locks weapons

DEMONIC DUEL



A demonic Samurai Warlord guards the gates to Hayabusa village. Despite the fact that he's on horseback and weilds a goddamn double-ended spear, he's accompanied by mages who try to spike you up close and fire magic blasts from afar. Grrrr!

looking for patterns of attack and combined patterns of attack. Ninja Gaiden plays out like a one-on-one fighting game, except you're often presented with four or five guys reaching for Ryu's throat. So, for example, while ghostly samurai are hacking at your butt, their mystic buddies are shooting energy bolts from a distance! It's mint, and come June time there'll be be groans of "Impossible!" as well as victory cries coming from you too. ✷


Even the mid-level bosses are hard work!

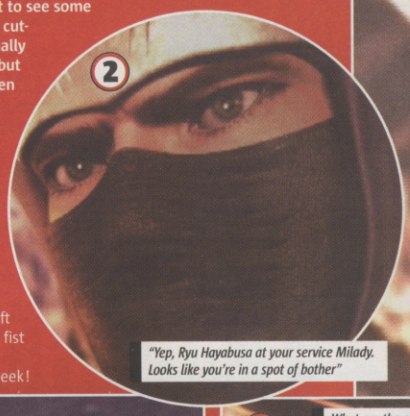
These guys literally run rings around Ryu!

DEADLY BEAUTY

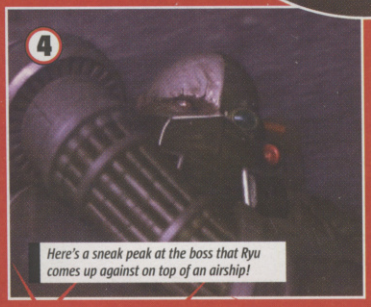
Occasionally you'll get to see some glorious scene-setting cut-scenes. You might usually find this stuff boring, but the stuff in Ninja Gaiden raises the bar in performance, we kid you not

Not only are the visuals stunning, but the drama grips you tighter than a ninja's pants, so much so that you may find yourself clutching the controller with your left hand, while forming a fist with your right, a tear trickling down your cheek!

1 Something desperately dangerous happening here. Only one man can save her...


2 "Yep, Ryu Hayabusa at your service Milady. Looks like you're in a spot of bother"

3 What are the odds that it's this guy to blame for all the death and destruction?


4 Here's a sneak peak at the boss that Ryu comes up against on top of an airship!

MID-AIR MAYHEM Combos can be continued while in mid-air, and there are many ways to end them

NINPO FLAMER Art of Fire Wheels is a Ninpo attack that cloaks Ryu in flames, burning the enemy

BEWARE MAGIC! Summoning magic looks cool but leaves Ryu wide open to every kind of attack

NINPO MARK TWO Art of Inferno is a Ninpo technique that summons a ball of flame to fire off

JUST HANGIN' OUT It takes Ryu ages to shimmy along ropes, and he's vulnerable the whole time!

NO LADDER PADDER You don't need to use a ladder if walls are close enough together, jumping will do

POWER ATTACKS Charge the attack button then let go for an Extinction Straight Slash technique!

HIGHLY CHARGED!

1

2

3

4

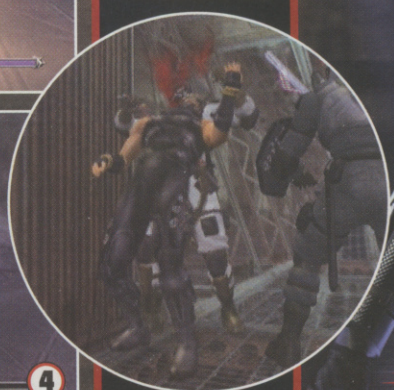
Takes a while to figure out this guy's range of moves, but the trick is to keep rolling out of the way, and fry him with Ryu's Ninpo flames of justice! Get too close to this overgrown tin can, and he'll grab hold of Ryu to electrocute him

HISTORY OF NINJA

522AD Japanese priests began practising 'Nonuse', which means the art of stealth.
790AD Ninjas began undercover missions for warring families.

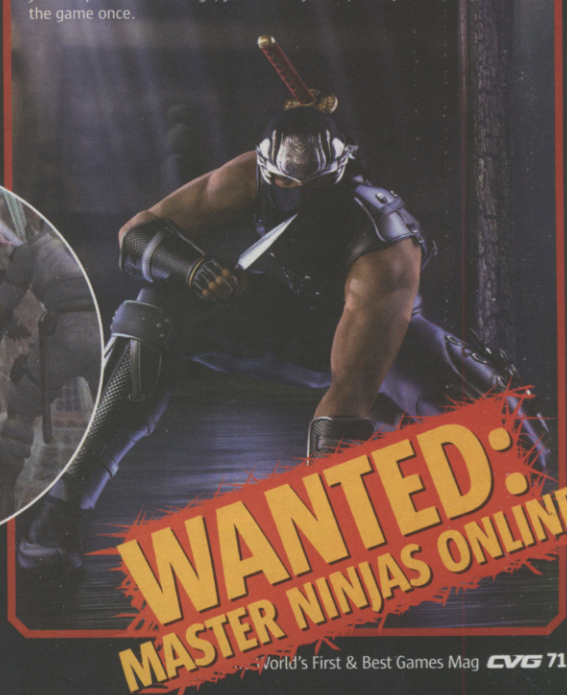
NINJA FACTTACK

- Samurai feared ninjas as they had no code of honour.
- Ninjas made stories up about themselves to impress others.


This is what happens if you let the enemy get too close – Ryu's throat gets slit wide open and the claret starts to flow freely

Microsoft and Tecmo are staging The Master Ninja Tournament, with the finals set to take place in Europe (venue TBC) in September. Specialist levels will be available to stream onto your Xbox via Live the moment Ninja Gaiden goes on sale.

Only players who perform the best in terms of completion time, number of kills, and technique, and so on will go through. To make sure you're up for the challenge, you can only take part if you've completed the game once.



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 TM

KONAMI

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

The PES 3 North Vs South Master League Challenge
Aston Events Centre, 8 Aston Hall Road, Aston, Birmingham. B6 7LB

24th april

Register now at www.pesleague.co.uk
Hurry! Places are very limited.

NORTH V SOUTH

- **First come first served entry system.**
- **Play with your best Master League teams.**

£1000 UP FOR GRABS!

PLUS!
The overall winner will qualify for an all expenses paid trip to the European Pro Evolution Soccer Championship in Corsica.

THE IMPORTANT STUFF

Anyone can enter the biggest PES3 knockout tournament ever staged, with £1000 cash, loads of prizes, goody bags and exclusive merchandise all up for grabs. Enter your best Master League line up in the main knockout event, take part in multiplayer challenges, pit your wits against the UK National PES Champion or Konami and CVG reps. Register at www.pesleague.co.uk now.

Entrants are selected on a first come, first served basis. You will be required to submit your master league team before the event and specify whether you'll be part of the North or South areas of the challenge depending on where you live. Entrants will be notified by either post or email before the event if they have qualified. See www.pesleague.co.uk for full terms and conditions. The organisers reserve the right to change the final prizes.

REVIEWS

FULLY INDEPENDENT & MULTIFORMAT ✶ TRUST NO ONE ELSE

Rise To Honour
Martial arts mentalist Maura tears Sony's big game of the month apart. It's got Jet Li in a starring role, but does that make it a good game?

Pokémon Colosseum
He'd never admit it, but our Alex Huhtala has a healthy critter collection to send into battle in the awesome new Cube scrapper

Far Cry
Never mind watching Holidays From Hell, let Will tell you all about this trek into the worst vacation ever, but the best shooter in ages!

SO BAD THEY'RE GOOD? NOPE. JUST PLAIN OLD BAD

Not to gloat, right, but we get all our games free. So it's easy for us journo types to see games like Glass Rose, Midnight Nowhere and International Golf Pro, and have a good giggle at how pony they are. Truth is, bad games aren't funny at all when you've spent good money on them. There are a lot of games in the Average, Weak and Oh Dear categories this month, so careful how you spend – even if you do see new releases on sale for cheap.

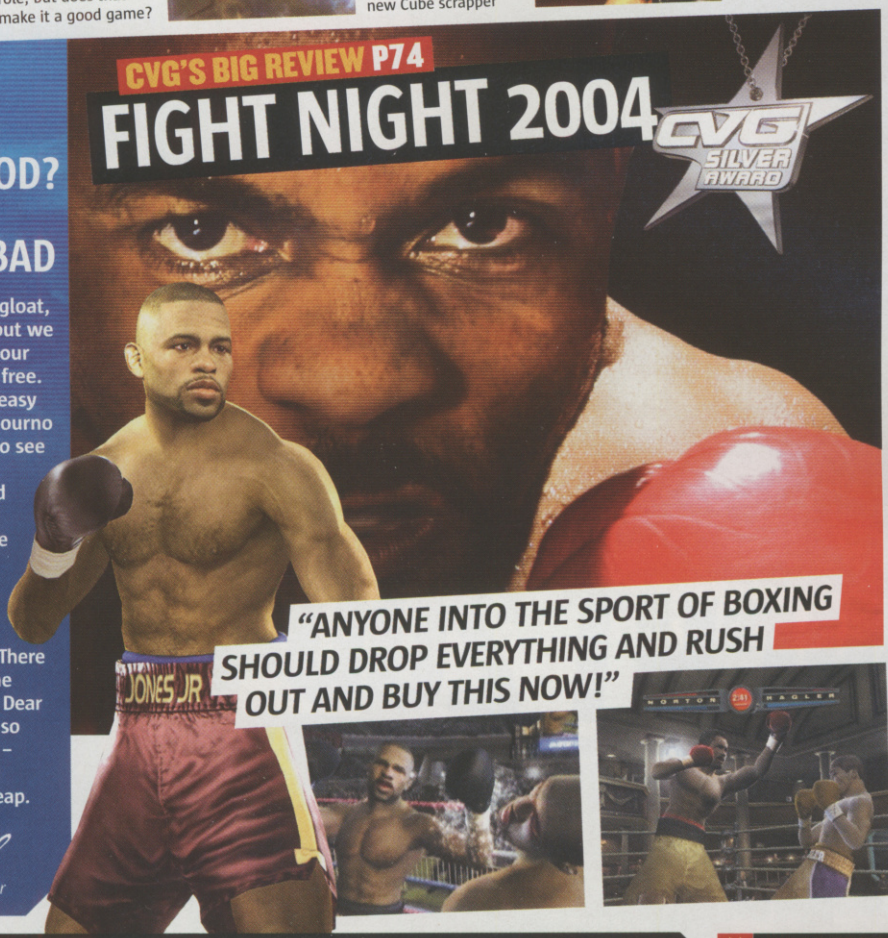
Lee Skittrell

Lee **Skittrell** *Reviews Editor*

CVG'S BIG REVIEW P74

FIGHT NIGHT 2004

CVG SILVER AWARD



"ANYONE INTO THE SPORT OF BOXING SHOULD DROP EVERYTHING AND RUSH OUT AND BUY THIS NOW!"

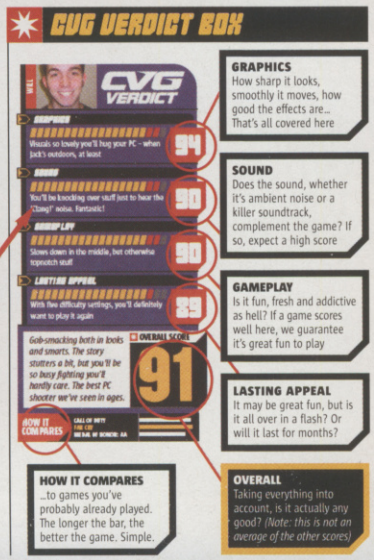
THIS MONTH

FIGHT NIGHT 2004 74
PS2 XBOX
RISE TO HONOUR 78
PS2
MIDNIGHT NOWHERE 79
PC
GLASS ROSE 79
PS2
POKÉMON COLOSSEUM 80
GC
FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL 82
PS2 XBOX
MTX: MOTOTRAX 83
PS2 XBOX
INTERNATIONAL GOLF PRO 84
PS2
RISK: GLOBAL DOMINATION 84
PS2
BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM 85
PC
FAR CRY 86
PC
UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING 88
XBOX
DEAD MAN'S HAND 89
XBOX PC
MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE OPERATION SURMA 89
GC
PROJECT ZERO II: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY 90
PS2
METROID: ZERO MISSION 94
GBA
SCOOBY-DOO! MYSTERY MAYHEM 95
PS2 XBOX GC
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 95
PS2 XBOX GC PC
TENCHU: RETURN FROM DARKNESS 97
XBOX
TRANSFORMERS 98
PS2
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY 99
PS2 XBOX
BAD BOYS II 99
PS2 XBOX
DRAGON BALL Z: TAIKETSU 99
GBA
SPACE INVADERS ANNIVERSARY 99
PS2
POOL PARADISE 99
PS2
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL 2004 99
PS2 XBOX PC
YU-GI-OH! WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT 2004 99
GBA
IMPORT! NINJA GAIDEN 100
XBOX
IMPORT! ONIMUSHA 3 101
PS2
IMPORT! FIREFIGHTER FD18 102
PS2
IMPORT! DRAKENGARD 102
PS2
IMPORT! LIFELINE 102
PS2

HOW CVG'S REVIEWS WORK

CVG's reviews are the most accurate, informative and downright honest you'll ever read. Here's why...

CVG VERDICT BOX



CVG SCORES

By popular demand, CVG has switched to percentages to bring you the most precisely calculated scores ever!

95+ DIAMOND Award

90-94+ GOLD Award

85-89+ SILVER Award

75-84+ You'd be pleased to get this as a gift, though next month you'll probably forget you own it.

65-74+ Some fun to be had but one best bought by your mate so you can get a lend of it.

55-64+ A pretty average game that's unlikely to set the gaming world on fire on any level.

41-54+ You really shouldn't even consider renting one of these, let alone buying one.

UNDER 40 STINKER Award

THE CVG AWARDS SYSTEM

We score everything out of 100, to give you the most accurate reviews ever. And if a game is exceptional, we'll give it an Award, so you know what a diamond game it is...

DIAMOND Award
The most coveted award a game can get. It's worth buying the console just to play it!

GOLD Award
A bloody amazing game you've got to own. It's brilliant in almost every respect, so go get it!

SILVER Award
Highly recommended by CVG's experts. May not be anything ground-breaking but it's still ace.

STINKER Award
More abominable than a reality TV show, set in a barbers, called "I'm a Yeti..."

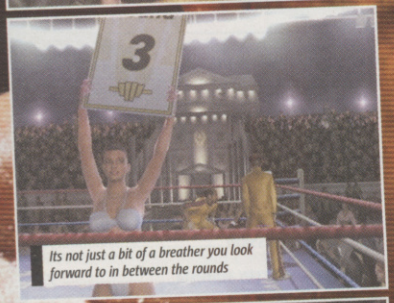
RELEASE DATE
30 APRIL

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-2

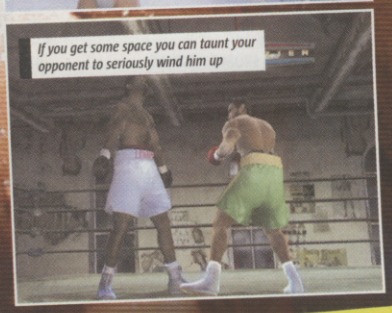
CONTACT INFO
* PUB: EA
* DEV: EA
* WWW.EASPORTS.COM/GAMES/FIGHTNIGHT2004
* CONTACT: 0870 243 2435

ONLINE GAMING
* PS2 ONLY
* BROADBAND ADAPTER

Sweat flies everywhere as a whooping left hook connects wiht reviewer Steve O's glass jaw



Its not just a bit of a breather you look forward to in between the rounds



If you get some space you can taunt your opponent to seriously wind him up

CVG SILVER AWARD

FIGHT NIGHT 2004

CVG just fell in punch-drunk love

DEAD MINGER

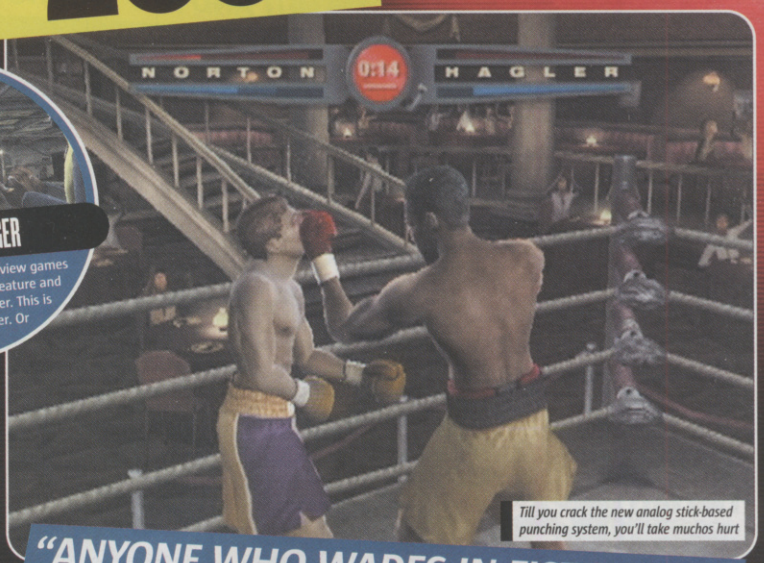
It's illegal for CVG mag to review games with a character creation feature and not put in our own fighter. This is Steve O's dead ringer. Or minger.

Boxing's one of the few legal sports left where you can watch enormous men batter each other into unconsciousness. The other is football – about 20 minutes after the final whistle, round the back of the away stand.

As with anything that involves lashings of physical violence, you'd have thought boxing would have a rich heritage in videogames. But no. Like a world heavyweight bout that's actually worth watching, decent boxing games only come around once every couple years or so. Step into the ring, Fight Night 2004.

SHOW YOUR WAD

With EA Sports games, you know you're in for a show. From the moment that cheesy Yank voice blurts "It's in the game", you can be sure they've thrown a wad of cash at the damn thing. Fight Night 2004 struts its high production values stuff with hip-hop tunes featuring the likes of Puff Daddy and Notorious B.I.G. as well as featuring the official likenesses of famous boxers.



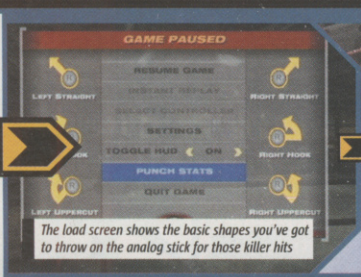
Till you crack the new analog stick-based punching system, you'll take muchos hurt

"ANYONE WHO WADES IN FISTS FLYING WILL GET CREAMED IN NO TIME"

■ The right stick controls your punches. It's designed to mirror the movement of a boxer's arm. All blows are aimed at the head

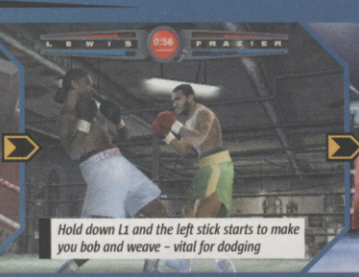
BYE-BYE BUTTON BASHING

unless you hold down L1 for body shots. No 'button bashing' here. We need a new phrase for stick frenzy – 'analog aggro' maybe?

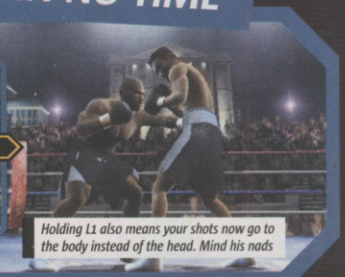


The load screen shows the basic shapes you've got to throw on the analog stick for those killer hits

Using the sticks means you don't get blistered thumbs when you play for hours and hours



Hold down L1 and the left stick starts to make you bob and weave – vital for dodging

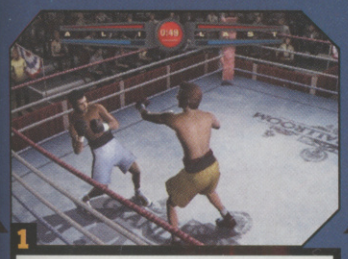


Holding L1 also means your shots now go to the body instead of the head. Mind his nads

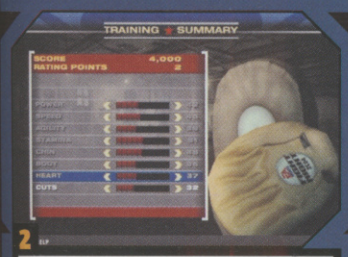
FIGHT RIGHT

The way you box should change depending on which fighter you're using. Each one is rated for eight stats, excluding height, reach and weight.

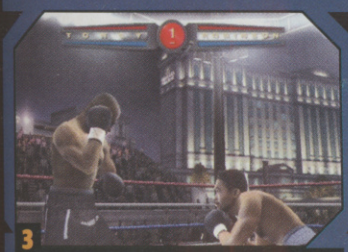
So if you've got a lanky beanpole with great speed, you should use your jab to keep your opponent at arm's length. If you're built like a brick poophouse, squat but with serious power in your punch, you're better off getting in close and making those body blows take their toll.



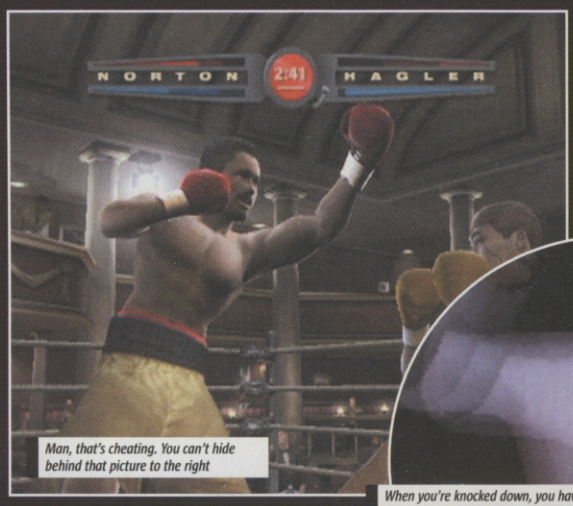
1 ■ *If you've got a really tall fighter then make sure all your jabs count, and don't let him get in too close*



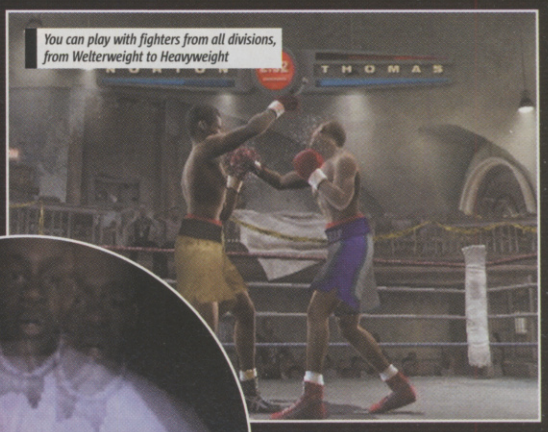
2 ■ *You can increase your stats with stints in the gym. You'll need to if you want to climb the rankings ladder*



3 ■ *If you've got lots of power and your opponent has a weak body, stay low and give him plenty in the gut*



Man, that's cheating. You can't hide behind that picture to the right



You can play with fighters from all divisions, from Welterweight to Heavyweight

When you're knocked down, you have to use both analog sticks to focus the blurry images so your fighter will get up before the 10 count

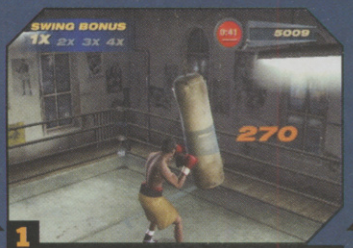
"YOU GET CUT AND BRUISED TILL IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE'S STAGED RIVER DANCE ON YOUR NOGGIN"

We're dead impressed by just how realistic FN2004 is – injuries look so good you wince when you see them

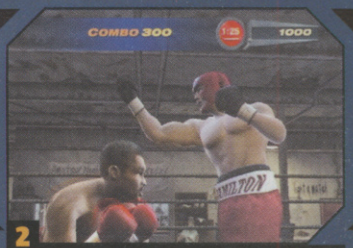
MY MATE GYM

In Career mode, you can visit the gym between each fight to brush up on your bruiser chops.

These training modes not only increase your fighter's stats, but are also massively helpful when it comes to sussing out the controls. But there are only four different routines, and they soon get repetitive, meaning you soon get bored of them.

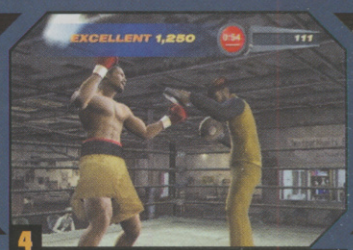


1 ■ *The heavy bag is tricky at first. It's about timing not speed, as you've got to make that big old bag swing*



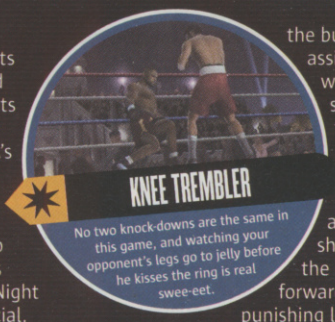
2 ■ *Sparring teaches you to dodge and block. It ups your stamina and agility, which makes you bob better*

3 ■ *The combo dummy is like a game of Simon Says, as you have to repeat patterns of blows on Mr Legless*



4 ■ *This routine is hard – the bloke holds out his hand and calls a shot, which you've got to throw instantly*

But if the game's a washout, EA can blow its licensed sportsmen and sell-out hip hop out of its bung-hole. No need for beats booming from EA's corporation-sized butt here, though, as from the moment you land your first quick one-two jabs to some poor sap's head, you know Fight Night 2004 is something special.

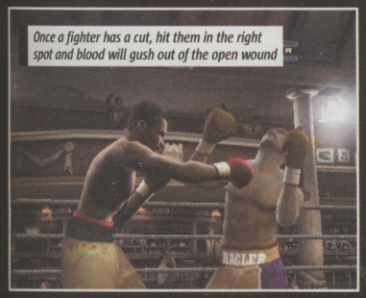


KNEE TREMBLER

No two knock-downs are the same in this game, and watching your opponent's legs go to jelly before he kisses the ring is real swee-eet.

TOTAL CARNAGE

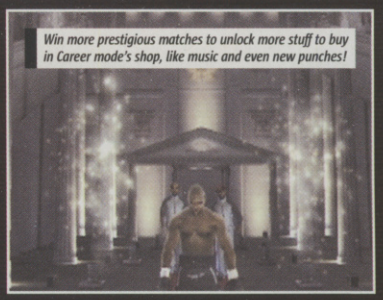
The knock-out blow is the Total Punch Control system. What this does is eliminate the buttons from play, instead assigning all your punching work to the right analog stick. The way you fling the stick around is mirrored by the punches you throw – flick the stick up and to the right, and you'll lash out with a sharp right jab. Slam it to the left and then twist it forward and you'll unleash a punishing left hook.



Once a fighter has a cut, hit them in the right spot and blood will gush out of the open wound

We haven't played a fighting game of any discipline that uses the analog stick like this. It has two implications. First, this ain't Ready 2 Rumble or any other arcade-style number you can pick up and straight away be lovin' it. It takes time to get to grips with, and the brutal battle on-screen will initially be matched by the fight you're having with your joypad.

Second, boxing games will never be the same again. Using the stick to throw punches is so much more clever and flexible than any system before, and the feeling of instinctive control it gives you is something special. Don't be surprised to see it ripped off quicker than Jordan's hot-pants in, well anyone's bedroom.



Win more prestigious matches to unlock more stuff to buy in Career mode's shop, like music and even new punches!

BLOODY SPORTS

Once a few blows have been exchanged, boy does it show, with cuts, bruises and welts all appearing on your fighter's face, making it look like someone's staged River Dance on your noggin. These all look totally realistic, as does the rest of the game, and we can't go a whole review without mentioning just how spot-on Fight Night's visuals are.

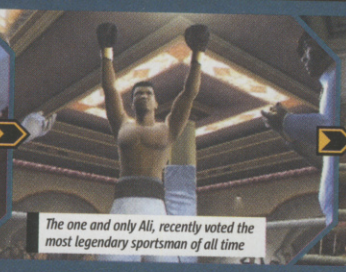
From the ducking and diving, to the way your head jerks back when caught by an upper-cut, to the way the fighters' legs give out before they eat canvas – the game has had 'quality' stamped into its face with a training dumbbell. »

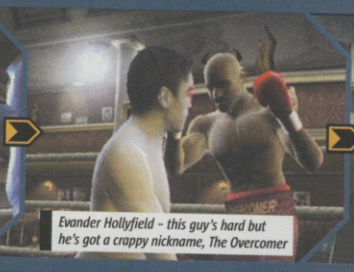
■ On its roster of real-life ruckus wreakers, FN2004 has stars from across the years and the divisions. Going back a bit, we've got

FIGHTERS CLUB

the legendary Rocky Marciano, Mohammed Ali, and our very own Lennox Lewis. Poor old Frank Bruno. Not even a look in.

Rocky Marciano – remember him? Nope, neither do we, but he was champ half a century ago


The one and only Ali, recently voted the most legendary sportsman of all time

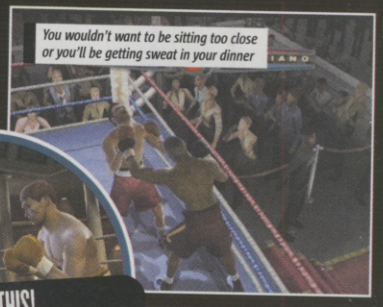

Evander Hollyfield – this guy's hard but he's got a crappy nickname, The Overcomer

Our lad Lewis, the only reigning Heavyweight champion to retire on top. Chicken

"THE BEST WAY TO ENJOY FIGHT NIGHT 2004 IS WITH A BUNCH OF YOUR MATES"

It's fun leathering AI boxers, but even more laying into your mates

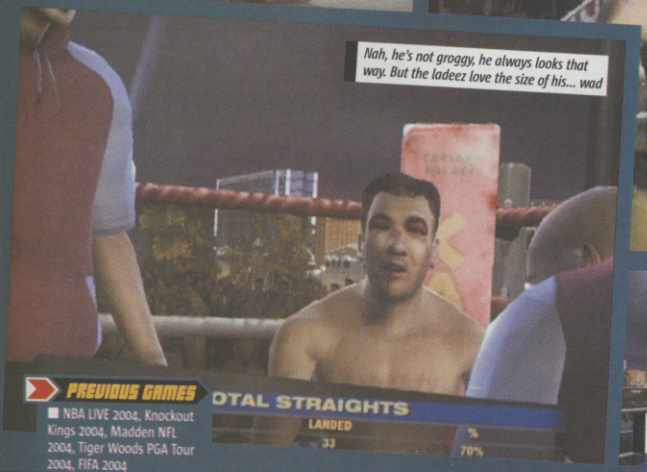
Punching your mate's digital face till it looks like a purple turnip is proper wick


You wouldn't want to be sitting too close or you'll be getting sweat in your dinner

SIGN THIS!

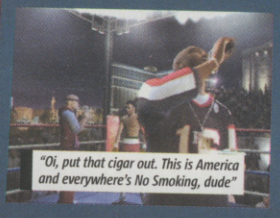
R2 triggers a 'signature punch' – basically a wild haymaker that if it connects will make your opponent see stars and probably stripes. Use sparingly!

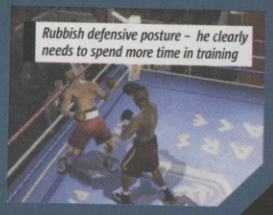
You can order a replay at any point, which is great for when for moments of glory


Nah, he's not groggy, he always looks that way. But the ladeez love the size of his... wad

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ NBA LIVE 2004, Knockout Kings 2004, Madden NFL 2004, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004, FIFA 2004


"Oi, put that cigar out. This is America and everywhere's No Smoking, dude"


Rubbish defensive posture – he clearly needs to spend more time in training

HARD FACTS

■ Features 32 Boxers
■ Nine different pyrotechnic effects
■ Four training mini-games

DID YOU KNOW?

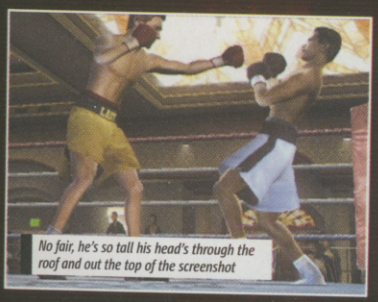
■ Founded in 1982, Electronic Arts raked in more than $2.5 billion in the 2003 fiscal year. That's one hell of a lot of money

THAT'S NO CAREER

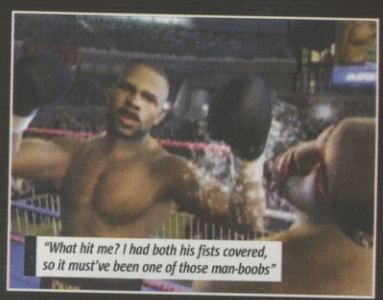
The best way to enjoy FN2004 is with a bunch of mates, happily beating seven shades of shite out of each other. On your own, you've really just got the Career mode. This lets you choose one of the boxers in the game, or build your own, and then set off to claim some of those World Title belts.

After each fight you can train your boxer a little, and money earnt can be spent on new shorts, gloves, and even fireworks for your entrance routine. But to be brutal, if FN2004 has a weak point, it's here – there isn't quite enough in the career mode to make it a one-player must-have.

That said, anyone who's actually into the sport of boxing should drop everything and rush out and buy FN2004 NOW, even if you're reading this on the bog and your trousers are round your ankles, kids only half way to the pool. And the same applies to anyone looking for a beat 'em up with a difference, because as well as being a top-dollar recreation of boxing, it's a damn fine videogame in its own right too. ✶


No fair, he's so tall his head's through the roof and out the top of the screenshot

Erm, we're no experts but you're leaving yourself kinda open there, amigo


"What hit me? I had both his fists covered, so it must've been one of those man-boobs"

ENTER THE ARENA

Much like boxing, wrestling, the Superbowl and every other sport the Americans have got their mitts on, Fight Night tries to beef out the entertainment that's on offer with dose of showbiz.

So a major feature of the career mode is earning enough bucks to put together an entrance routine that's so blinging bad-ass that you could win an Oscar for best director...

■ First thing you'll want to spend your money on are even skimpier outfits for your booty shakers

■ Buy ever more hip-hop to blast out as you strut your gold-plated butt right into the ring

■ Earn enough dough and finally you can afford lasers and fireworks to totally impress the laydeez

CVG 2ND OPINION

GRAEME

Ever been punched? Not by your sister, I mean properly punched? I have. Nobhead broke my nose. Fight Night hits with such awesome intensity that it gave me flashbacks of that brain-scrambling moment. The coolest thing is that it's not just brainless brawling, but tactical battle. Thumpingly good stuff and much better than getting walloped for real.

CVG VERDICT

STEVE O

GRAPHICS 91
They look, move, punch and bleed just like they do on the telly

SOUND 88
Licensed hip-hop complements raucus crowd noise and fight effects

GAMEPLAY 90
The most sophisticated punch and defence system EVER

LASTING APPEAL 84
Playing your mates is awesome, but the career mode could be better

FN2004's brilliant analog stick punching system gives boxing its own genre – this is much more than just a beat 'em up with big red gloves and silly shorts on.

OVERALL SCORE 89

HOW IT COMPARES
MIKE TYSON BOXING
FIGHT NIGHT 2004
READY 2 RUMBLE ROUND 2

GET CVG FOR JUST £1.94!

Why pay £3.25 for CVG in the shops?

Subscribe today for as little as £1.94 per issue! That way you'll **save up to £17 a year** to spend on all the latest games releases. Plus! CVG will be delivered FREE to your door each month – so you don't have to miss out on valuable gaming time at the shops.

YOUR EXCLUSIVE OFFER:

- 3 trial issues
- SAVE 40% on the cover price
- FREE £5 Virgin Megastores voucher in every issue
- 2 FREE tips books with every issue
- FREE delivery
- The best games reviews on all formats, first!

What are you waiting for?

There's no risk involved. Your subscription will begin with 3 trial issues. So, even if you decide CVG isn't right for you, just cancel within 2 weeks of receiving your 3rd issue to get a FULL refund!

CALL NOW:

0845 126 0393

or complete and return the form below ▼▼▼

CVG Subscription application form

☐ **Yes!** Please start my subscription to CVG with 3 trial issues. I understand that I can write to cancel within 2 weeks of receiving my 3rd trial issue and receive a full refund.

OR ☐ I am already a subscriber. Please extend my subscription with this offer.

YOUR DETAILS (UK ONLY)

MR/MS/MISS FORENAME SURNAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE YEAR OF BIRTH

DAYTIME PHONE MOBILE PHONE

EMAIL

YOUR PAYMENT DETAILS - 13 issues for £25.25 (Save 40%)

Complete section 1-Cheque, 2-Credit/Debit Card or 3-Direct Debit

1 ☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Dennis Publishing Ltd

2 ☐ Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX

☐ Switch/Maestro (Issue No. ☐)

CARD NO.

EXP.

SIGNED DATE

3 ☐ **Direct Debit Payment – £5.85 every 3 issues (Save 40%)**

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit DIRECT Debit

Please fill in the form and send to: Dennis Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST NAT2784, Somerton TA11 6TB

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the manager: Bank name

Address

Postcode

Account in the name(s) of

Branch sort code

Bank/Building Society account number

Originator's Identification Number: 7 2 4 6 8 0

Ref no. to be completed by Dennis Publishing

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Dennis Publishing Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Dennis Publishing Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

Your details will be processed by Dennis Publishing Ltd (publishers of Computer and Video Games magazine) and our suppliers in full accordance with UK data protection legislation. Dennis Publishing Ltd may contact you with information about our other products and services. Please tick if you prefer NOT to receive such information by post ☐ email ☐ phone ☐ mobile phone messaging ☐. Dennis Publishing Ltd occasionally shares data, on a secure basis, with other reputable companies who wish to contact you with information about their products and services. Please tick if you prefer NOT to receive such information by post ☐ phone ☐. Please tick if you DO wish to receive such information by email ☐ mobile phone messaging ☐

You will be able to view your subscription details online at www.subsinfo.co.uk

NOW RETURN THIS FORM TO: Computer and Video Games Subscriptions Department, FREEPOST NAT2784,Somerton, TA11 6TB (No stamp required)

Order Ref: P0405

RELEASE DATE APRIL 16

GAME INFO COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: SONY
- DEV: SONY
- WWW.RISETOHONOUR.COM
- CONTACT: 0870 5998877

RISE TO HONOUR

Hong Kong legend in a bone-crunching orgy of old-skool fist-flying fun

Beating the bosses is tough work. Random button-bashing just won't cut it

When all else fails, go for the dreaded Fart of Doom. Works every time

Fowl play! Kit beats a chef to a pulp with a dead chicken. Talk about a roasting

Press L2 to trigger Adrenaline moves. Make the punches fly even faster than usual!

Cartilage scraping across bone makes a sickening sound, but for fans of Hong Kong action movies, there's nothing sweeter. Fists connecting with faces, boots knocking the wind out of quaking guts, all accompanied by a macabre symphony of limbs a-cracking and skulls a-poppin'.

Hong Kong action fans like it raw, bloody and brutal, and Jet Li knows how to deliver. Now he's decided to transfer his double-jointed, ass-kicking talents to the world of videogames, will the result be John Woo-style hardcore realism or Tarantino-esque parody?

The story kicks off in Hong Kong where Li's character, Kit Yun, is a bodyguard for a notorious crime lord. When his master is murdered, Yun travels to San Francisco to deliver a note to the dead gangster's daughter, Michelle. And that's really all you need to know about that. Like many of the best Hong Kong action movies, the plot is merely a paper-thin device on which hangs an endless succession of set-piece brawls, chase sequences and boss battles. Even so, the linking cut-scenes look so good they could have been lifted straight from Romeo Must Die, Lethal Weapon 4 or any one of Jet Li's 30 movies.

KISS OF THE DRAGON

Can you wiggle your thumbs and crook your index fingers? You can? Good. That means you'll have no problem mastering the Rise To Honour control system. All combat moves are performed with the right stick, while movement is controlled by the left stick. There are some variations that involve holding down the L1 and R1 buttons (see Turning Tricks, left), but most of the time all you have to do is waggle like crazy to send your enemies straight to hell. It takes some getting used to and feels a little random at first, but once you start stringing the combos together you'll be laughing.

Behind all the stunning motion-capture work, lavish cut-scenes and big screen production values, Rise To Honour is a humble old-skool beat 'em up, with the odd stealth or chase level tossed into the mix. It may be linear and occasionally repetitive, but the spectacular set pieces will surely rock your world as hard as any Hong Kong classic. ✷

PREVIOUS GAMES

- Syphon Filter 1, 2 and 3, Ico, Fantavision, Eyetoy: Play

HARD FACTS

- There are a total of 63 game 'stages' to explore
- Over 300 of Jet and his stunt team's moves were motion-captured per day
- Over 200 people from 11 countries were involved in making Rise To Honour
- Travel to 11 different locations in the game, divided between Hong Kong and San Francisco

DID YOU KNOW?

- Aged nine, Jet Li became the national Chinese Wushu (martial arts) Champion. He even visited the White House, where then US President Richard Nixon asked him to be his bodyguard. He refused.

Jet can take anybody down, and he can do it dressed in denim Starsky and Hutch-style

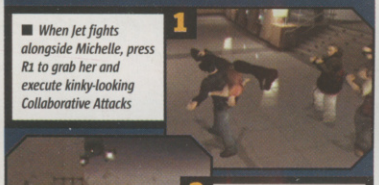
"And to relax, I like to bend my leg behind my ear, just so..."

You can keep the Cantonese dialogue with subtitles for added authenticity

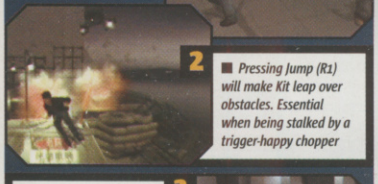
TURNING TRICKS

Who'd have thought a humble stick could do so much? In Rise To Honour, the right analog stick is your very best friend.

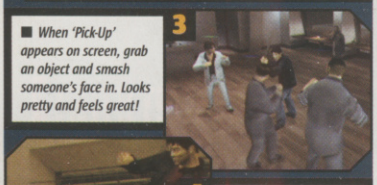
Caress it, kiss it, hell, give it a good sucking if you feel so moved, but watch the drool. When you feel like injecting a little spice into the proceedings, the on-screen instructions will tell you which buttons to press and when.



1 ■ When Jet fights alongside Michelle, press R1 to grab her and execute kinky-looking Collaborative Attacks

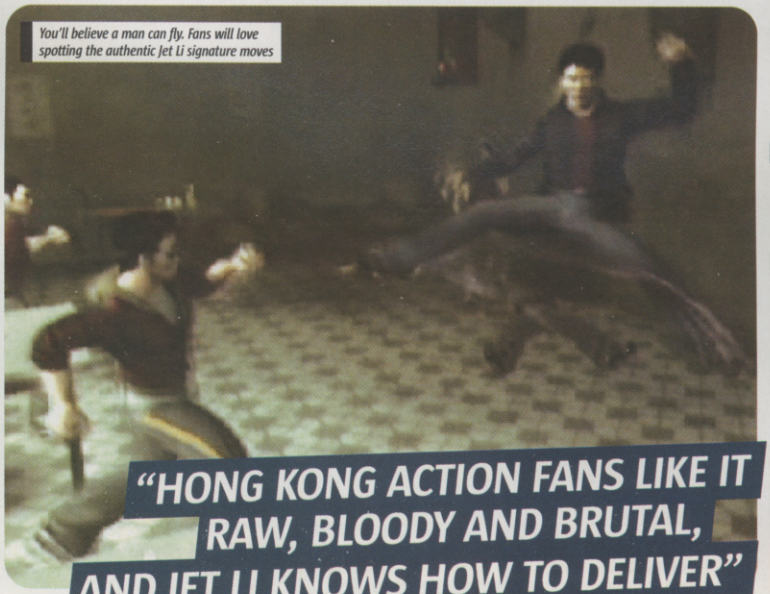


2 ■ Pressing Jump (R1) will make Kit leap over obstacles. Essential when being stalked by a trigger-happy chopper



3 ■ When 'Pick-Up' appears on screen, grab an object and smash someone's face in. Looks pretty and feels great!

4 ■ Holding down R1 and L1 and stroking the stick triggers a spectacular array of context-sensitive Counter-Moves



You'll believe a man can fly. Fans will love spotting the authentic Jet Li signature moves

"HONG KONG ACTION FANS LIKE IT RAW, BLOODY AND BRUTAL, AND JET LI KNOWS HOW TO DELIVER"

CVG VERDICT

MAURA

GRAPHICS 94
Hong Kong and San Francisco look grimy in the right kind of way, and Jet looks amazing

SOUND 82
Jet Li does his own voice acting, and the rousing music is suitably epic

GAMEPLAY 73
One-dimensional but relentlessly rampant beat 'em up action. Keeps your fingers busy

LASTING APPEAL 68
Hard, fast and looks the business, but it's all over just a little too quickly

Kick-ass action featuring the authentic moves of a Hong Kong legend. You won't have to do much thinking, but the finger-waggling is fun while it lasts.

OVERALL SCORE 71

HOW IT COMPARES
- TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA
- RISE TO HONOUR
- DEAD TO RIGHTS

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

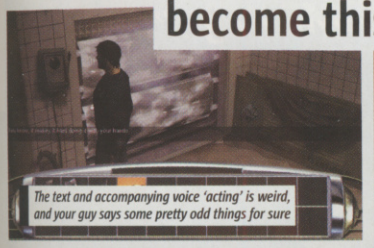
GAME INFO: COST: £19.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: OXYGEN INTERACTIVE
- DEV: SATURN +
- WWW.BUKA.COM/GAME/GAME_14.HTM
- CONTACT: 01933 391999

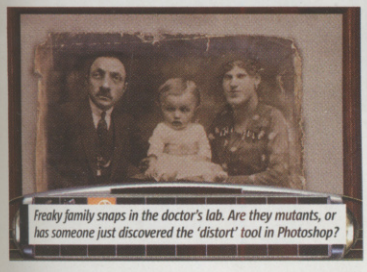
PC CD ROM

MIDNIGHT NOWHERE

Since when did murder and depravity become this dull?



The text and accompanying voice 'acting' is weird, and your guy says some pretty odd things for sure



Freaky family snaps in the doctor's lab. Are they mutants, or has someone just discovered the 'distort' tool in Photoshop?

like I'm gonna get my sick-list signed.

Just one of the many 'treats' in store later on in the game. She must have a heck of a time at airport security...

It's actually more fun watching your hero get sliced 'n' diced by the ventilation fan than trying to solve the puzzle itself

You can touch the dead lady in rude places but you can't grope the man. Sexism is such a bitch

Feel up a dead lady's boob! Murder, mystery, and a touch of light necrophilia, there's plenty to get excited about in Midnight Nowhere. It's sad then, that the actual game around which all this perversion revolves is a below average point-and-clicker.

The interface is simple enough: you can look at, pick up and interact with item hot spots, or natter with people in the static environments. It's dead easy to get to grips with – but the puzzles are the exact opposite.

The problem with most point-and-click games is that you're never really sure just how the developers want you to solve their puzzles. To make matters worse, Midnight Nowhere is totally illogical too. In the first room for instance, you need to break open a faulty electrical unit, but you can't just tear it off with your hands, nor can you pick up one of the many gloves on the floor to get a better grip. You can't even pick up the broom handle that is mere stage dressing. Instead, you have to use a microscope to smash open an emergency panel and use the axe inside.

The often illogical and restrictive way the game unfolds ruins what should have been a sick journey into the murkiest and most unpleasant depths of what adult gaming is all about. A real waste. ✷

LEE

CVG VERDICT

The sick but cool setting and story aren't given the chance to shine because the puzzles are so random and annoying. Only for the extremely patient.

OVERALL SCORE: 53

HOW IT COMPARES
- ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND
- MIDNIGHT NOWHERE
- GRIM FANDANGO

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: COST: £19.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: CAPCOM
- DEV: CAPCOM
- WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP/GNB
- CONTACT: 020 8846 2550

PS2

GLASS ROSE

And the winner of CVG's worst game of the year so far is...

It's hard to fathom just what Capcom thought it was doing with Glass Rose. Maybe the company execs signed it off before anyone actually put the gameplay in.

There's this mansion that's stuck in a time warp, see, and the place was home to a series of infamous murders in the 1920s. You get caught up with the events of those murders while also trying to rescue your gal pal Naomi, who is caught in another time slip slightly off-kilter to your own. Oh, and you can read other people's minds too.

Cool story then, but more than that, the game is actually an interactive storybook. You simply point a cursor at random objects to inspect them and move the plot along. What Glass Rose adds to the point-and-click genre is the way you can chat to people and highlight words and phrases to 'converse' with them. Trouble is, the game won't accept any highlighted word with punctuation in, and you have to explore all conversation branches before it lets you continue.

Worse yet is the fact that on the Standard difficulty setting, it's virtually unplayable. You're offered no assistance in sussing out clues or working out what the key conversation words might be. By contrast, on the Easy setting, EVERYTHING is highlighted so that the game pretty much plays itself. This isn't even worth checking out for curiosity value. ✷

The plot sounds like Clock Tower meets Shadow of Memories, but it plays like point-and-click poo

Main hero Takasi is actually modelled on Japanese boy band drumming 'sensation' Masahiro Matsuoka. Oh dear...

The conversation element could have worked well, but it's just much too fiddly and unforgiving

Read the mind of the police inspector and he sums up what you'll be feeling when playing

LEE

CVG VERDICT

Given the original spooky mystery, we wanted to like this – we really did. The truth is it's the worst, least fun and most pointless game we've seen in years.

OVERALL SCORE: 18

HOW IT COMPARES
- BROKEN SWORD
- GLASS ROSE
- IN COLD BLOOD

RELEASE DATE
14 MAY

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO
* PUB: NINTENDO
* DEV: GAMEFREAK/THE POKÉMON COMPANY
* WWW.NINTENDO-EUROPE.COM
* CONTACT: 08706 060247

EXTRAS
48 BLOCKS ON MEMORY CARD * POKÉMON RUBY OR SAPPHIRE * GBA LINK CABLE * GBA

POKEMON COLOSSEUM

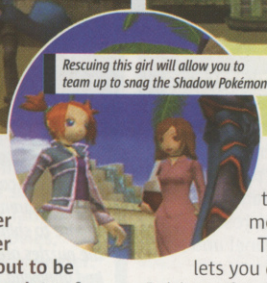
We Pokémon who are about to die salute you! Squeak, squeak, pika, pika!

"THE NEW STORY MODE LETS YOU EXPLORE THE WORLD OF POKEMON FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 3D"

CVG GOLD AWARD

Ooh, we've done something naughty. Quick, run away!

You can wait all day if you like, but that train isn't going anywhere


Rescuing this girl will allow you to team up to snag the Shadow Pokémon

Pokémon fans rejoice, as the mother of all monster battles is about to be unleashed on Cube. In this update of Pokémon Stadium, you not only get the chance to battle with the critters you collected on your travels in Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire on Game Boy Advance, but there's also a brand new RPG Story Mode.

Essentially you're getting two games for the price of... at least two. Because if you want to get the most from Colosseum, it's wise to have already fully explored either Pokémon Ruby or Sapphire and collected as many monsters as you can. You can then unleash them in 3D arena battles on the GameCube.

HEY, WHAT IS THIS?

But newcomers aren't unwelcome. For if you've never played a Pokémon title before, you're not excluded from the fun or required to fork out on all the cross-title connectors and monster swapping antics.

The brand new Story Mode lets you explore the world of Pokémon for the first time in 3D. We may have seen the monsters in all their 3D glory before, but this time you also get to see Pokémon Centres, rival trainers, villages and towns in 3D too. It's quite a treat on the eyes, coming on like a cuddly version of Final Fantasy.

DON'T CALL ME THE WANDERER

There's also a treat for players who are tired of spending hours and hours wandering about in the Pokémon wilderness waiting for an appearance from a rare creature. In Colosseum's Story Mode, there's no wandering at all. You simply choose a location you want to travel to on a map, hey presto and a cut-scene later, you're there! This 'innovation' means that there are no wild monsters to be caught. Instead you're on the lookout for Shadow Pokémon.

THE SHADOW KNOWS

"Shadow Pokémon!" you say, spitting your cornflakes all over the page. What the hell are they? Only sweet and innocent Pokémon that have been changed by an evil organisation so that their hearts remain shut. It's the saddest story we've ever heard. This tinkering under the bonnet by the dastardly evil organisation means Shadow Pokémon can launch attacks on rival trainers and are a bugger to train.

A new type of genetically modified Pokémon means a modified version of the Pokémon rules. No longer is it forbidden to catch a rival trainer's Pokémon during battle, but on one condition: only if it's a Shadow Pokemon. Before you shout bad form in an old-fashioned and very British way, don't feel bad about stealing from your opponents. The story sets up the action of stealing Shadow Pokémon as a worthy cause. Don't think of it as stealing, it's more liberating, more humane, more er... Poké-mane!

LINK-UP PARK

It wouldn't be a Pokémon game without some link-up action, and Colosseum offers the mother of all link-ups.

You even have to interact in the GBA world before you can unleash your monsters on the Cube. It's all very clever.

1 ■ Enter a Pokémon Centre on your GBA, go to the upstairs room and approach the person at the first desk

2 ■ Chat to the lady at the desk and you can upload your Pokémon party into the Colosseum world

3 ■ Select your monsters for battle – a human opponent can't see who you've chosen until the fight begins

4 ■ Seeing your GBA monsters on the GameCube is a real thrill – it's like they've been set free

IT'S HUGE!

You're not going to believe this! To celebrate the launch of Pokémon Colosseum, we've hooked up with Nintendo to offer one lucky reader and a friend an amazing experience: to play Pokémon Colosseum on a totally humungous IMAX screen in London during the official Tournament on May 8th! At 20m high and 26m wide, it's bigger than blubber-butt Wailord!

And as if that wasn't enough, you'll also get a GameCube and a copy of Pokémon Colosseum to play at home, and three runners-up will each win a copy of Pokémon Colosseum!

Quick, the closing date is April 24! Answer the question, fill in the form and send it in!

Q. What are the names of the first two Pokémon who accompany your quest in Pokémon Colosseum?

A. Espeon and Umbreon
B. Pikachu and Torchic
C. Bulbasaur and Charmander

YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT
Tick one of the following boxes
A.☐ B.☐ C.☐

★NAME: .....
★ADDRESS: .....
.....
.....
★POSTCODE: .....
★DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: .....

HUGE POKÉMON COLOSSEUM COMPO, CVG, 9 Dallington Street, London EC1V 0B

Refer to page 110 for terms and conditions. Closing date: 23 April 2004

PLAY POKÉMON COLOSSEUM ON THE BIGGEST SCREEN EVER!

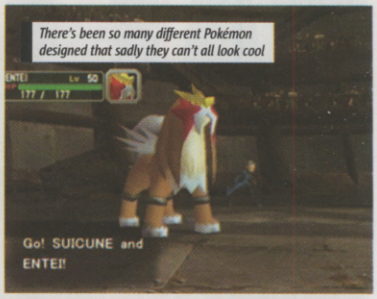
A WHOLE NEW WORLD

When they created a fully 3D world for Colosseum, the developers played it safe. It's set in the Orre region, a desolate, steam-punk-inspired place unlike any we've seen in a previous Pokémon game. It looks more like something from Final Fantasy.

There are great locations in the RPG Story mode and you'll meet lots of characters

Although a lot of Orre is bleak, there is still plenty of natural beauty to marvel at

You'll revisit lots of the same locations, collecting new items and snagging Pokémon

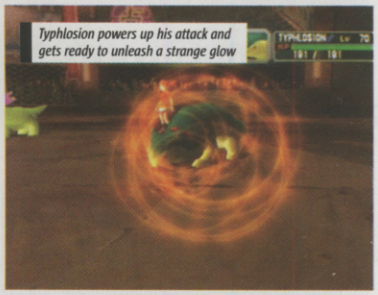


There's been so many different Pokémon designed that sadly they can't all look cool

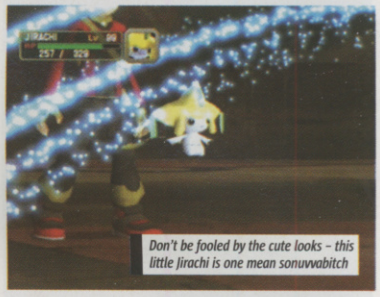
"IMPORT YOUR MONSTER SQUAD FROM RUBY OR SAPPHIRE AND BATTLE ALL-COMERS IN LAVISH 3D ARENAS"

Going shopping on the Game Boy was never like this – it's a bloomin' luxury!

We can't review a Pokemon game without the obligatory shot of Pikachu



Typhlosion powers up his attack and gets ready to unleash a strange glow



Don't be fooled by the cute looks – this little Jirachi is one mean sonuvvabitch

PREVIOUS GAMES

- Pokémon Pinball: Ruby & Sapphire, Pokémon Ruby, Pokémon Sapphire

HARD FACTS

- Pokémon was launched in 1996
- Over 120 million Pokémon games have been sold worldwide
- 24.6 million Pokémon games sold in Europe
- 2.4 million copies of Ruby and Sapphire sold in Europe
- Over 13 billion Pokémon trading cards sold

DID YOU KNOW?

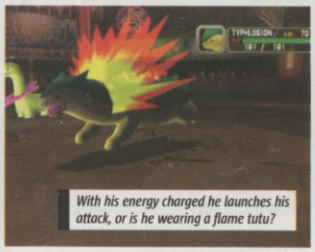
- Pokémon merchandise has generated over $15 billion to date. Roman Abramovich must have a large collection of Pikachus!

POKÉMON PARADISE

But wait, there's more! That's just the Story Mode we've covered. There's also the entirely separate Battle Mode. This part of the game is essentially the Cube update to the N64 Pokémon Stadium. To fully enjoy this section you really have to invest in all the add-ons. These include a GBA, a GBA-Cube link cable and a copy of Pokémon Ruby or Sapphire.

Once they're all hooked up – and you'll need the help of NASA scientists to perform this – you can import your monster squad from the Game Boy titles and battle all-comers in lavish 3D arenas.

Espeon is the second of the starting Pokémon – he's got a cool Confusion attack



With his energy charged he launches his attack, or is he wearing a flame tutu?

SIZE IS EVERYTHING

One of the best parts of having 3D versions of the Pokémon, is that you can finally see how different they are in size next to one another.

There are loads of configurations to play around with, with two-on-two battles, the more traditional one-on-one and loads of ways to get your friends linked into the action too. Great stuff!

So, is it a worthy entry in the Pokémon universe, or just another way of extracting a little more cash from your Pokémon-loving mitts? We'd say a definite worthy entry. The Battle side alone is worth the price of admission. Seeing the Game Boy monsters in full 3D with great animation is a lot different to how they look on a tiny GBA screen. Then the Story Mode points towards an exciting future for the series. One that's not limited to portable gaming, but could flourish as an epic RPG series played on a top home system. Pokémon we salute you. ✷

CVG 2ND OPINION

It's been a bloomin' long time coming, but the first true 3D Pokémon RPG is well worth the wait. I liked the Shadow Pokémon twist to the action and it gives the game a much tighter structure than the sprawling GBA games. The whole thing just feels a lot more grown-up. Battling in Colosseum mode is easily as much fun as in the Stadium games too. Ace!

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 87
The RPG bits look cool and the Pokémon in 3D are a sight to behold

SOUND — 89
Some great background music and plenty of Pokémon battle cries

GAMEPLAY — 92
There's something for everybody with RPG and gladiatorial battles

LASTING APPEAL — 94
Catch 'em on the GBA. Save them in the RPG. Then battle again and again

A dream for Poké-holics, the Battle mode would have been good enough on its own, but the added RPG is a great reason to rush out and buy. No, honestly.

OVERALL SCORE 90

HOW IT COMPARES
- LOST KINGDOMS II
- POKÉMON COLOSSEUM
- FF CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

AGENT ORANGE

The disadvantage of Shadow Pokémon is that they've been put under a curse that makes them oblivious to training. You have to cure them by a process of purification.

Taking Shadow types around in your party slowly makes them see the error of their ways. Once the shadow has lifted you can train and raise your new pal just like a normal honest-to-goodness Pokémon.

Your partner has the ability to see the Shadow Pokémon. She senses their presence before a battle

The purple cloud that shrouds them when you begin a battle identifies Shadow Pokémon. Snag it!

Purifying over 50 Shadow Pokémon will take a lot of time, but it adds hours and hours of play

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
NOW	COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1-2	PUB: AVALON INTERACTIVE DEV: INTERPLAY WWW.INTERPLAY.COM/FBOS CONTACT: 020 7551 0000

FALLOUT

BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL

Post-apocalyptic adventure sticking an atomic bomb up yer RPG

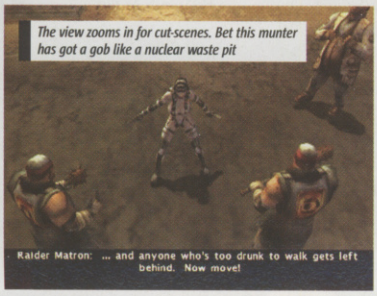
Choosing your weapons really matters: guns let you keep your distance but melee hits cause more damage

Holding L1 lets you lock-on to enemies and triangle performs dodging rolls

At the end of each section you'll come up against a boss, like Richard here. Dick to his mates

"FORGET SWORDS AND MACES – FALLOUT HAS YOU KICKING ASS WITH BASEBALL BATS AND SAWN-OFF SHOTGUNS"

Every time you attack there's a chance of a critical hit, meaning instant death for your opponent



The view zooms in for cut-scenes. Bet this munter has got a gob like a nuclear waste pit

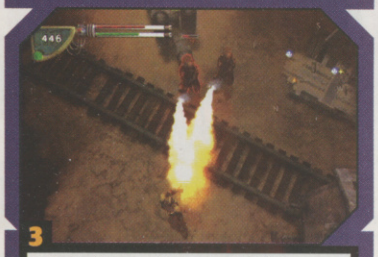
NUCLEAR FREAK-OUT

Intering factoid for you games history freaks: Fallout started life as a RPG on PC.

We loved its post-nuclear setting, its grisly sense of humour and its free-form gameplay. But (unfortunately) only a couple of things have really been carried over for Brotherhood of Steel: big mutants and even bigger weapons to kick the crap out of them.

1 ■ These wee sand crabs are well fast but your spiked metal gloves will sort them out sharpish

2 ■ Rad-scorpions nip, sting and hurl radioactive poison at you. Torch them for some crispy tail meat



3 ■ Mutated humans still know how to kill – keep your distance from these flame-boys and snipe away

4 ■ And the really massive mutants? Who cares, just make sure the big mutha stays down!

You know the problem with RPGs? Bloody dungeons and dragons and dark necromancers from Bunchofarsia and all that rubbish. If we wanted to spend our time with orcs and goblins we'd nip round Ozzy Osbourne's house.

Fallout: Brotherhood Of Steel is an RPG, but it's not about swords and sorcery. It's about a post-apocalyptic world ravaged by nuclear war where everyone's blowing each other's heads off just to pass the time. Now THAT'S what we like.

BROTHER OF BALDUR

If you've played Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II you'll know the score: this is powered by the same engine. Action takes place in real-time and the control system handles the combat well, letting you shift quickly between your weapons and put them to face-mashing use by battering a single button. Battles are brilliantly bloody. Forget lame swords and maces – Fallout has you kicking ass with baseball bats and sawn-off shotguns!

Unfortunately, the game is extremely linear. You get a task and go do it, then get another and go do that. Which would be fine if the huge levels weren't so boringly designed. We wandered around a town for half an hour looking for the last dude (unmarked on the radar, another problem) we had to slaughter, only to find him cowering in a corner. He got it good and proper, but more because we were annoyed at the game design than him.

And while the combat starts off as instant boom-boom fun, it quickly mutates into button bashing. You end up getting pissed off at enemies because they force you to do exactly the same thing again and again.

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ Baldur's Gate II: Dark Alliance, Fallout: Tactics, Fallout 2, Fallout

HARD FACTS

■ Number of crazy apocalypse weapons: 50
■ Number of hard-as-a-nut armour types: 6
■ Cost for a shag off Ruby, Fallout's 'entertainer': 10 caps
■ Number of swear words in first ten minutes: 7

DID YOU KNOW?

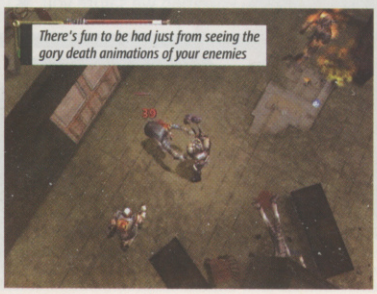
■ Nuclear explosions ignite big piss-off fireballs two miles wide with a temperature of 20 million degrees Fahrenheit. Scorchio, but still not as hot as Jessica Simpson.

THREE'S A CROWD

An atom of variety is added by the three playable classes and levelling up allows you to develop specific skills like sharp shooting or close-up head cracking, but it's the only opportunity you get to truly make choices and doesn't add enough to the gameplay.

That said, when the same gameplay lets you stick cleavers into radioactive mutant's skulls we can't be too negative. To be brutally honest, Brotherhood Of Steel feels like a half-arsed facelift of Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II, but that's not to say it doesn't offer some straight-forward RPG fun with a cool guns-and-guts angle. ✷

Cain's a mutant Ghoul, half-man, half-zombie. He's a bit slower but isn't harmed by radiation



There's fun to be had just from seeing the gory death animations of your enemies

The sense of humour never gets more sophisticated than a hooker who's lost her pussy. Cat, that is

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 81
Nice clear visuals hampered by the restrictive top-down viewpoint

SOUND — 67
Juicy squelches when you pop someone, but the reactive heavy-metal music doesn't work

GAMEPLAY — 70
Different characters and skills add variety, but the game itself is strictly linear

LASTING APPEAL — 77
Instant RPG carnage with plenty of ass-kicking attitude but lacks killer depth

Sticks a freakish finger up at nerdy, dull traditional RPGs. Could've done with tighter design and more variety to make it a real nuclear blast.

OVERALL SCORE 74

HOW IT COMPARES
FINAL FANTASY X
FALLOUT: BROTHERHOOD OF STEEL
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II

There should've been more fiddly assault course-style objectives like this timed garage mission

This sort of copycat challenge is a waste of time. There's nothing original or exciting about it

You've got to bump into the guy in green three times to complete the challenge. Utter guff!

Even just a standard two-player split-screen head-to-head is more thrilling than most of the single-player stuff

MTX MOTOTRAX FEATURING TRAVIS PASTRANA

Big air, small thrills. A totally deflating dirt biker

It's one of those eternal mysteries like, 'where does belly button fluff come from?' Why are there so many friggin' dirt bike games and who the chuff's buying them?

MX Unleashed, MX Superfly, Freestyle MetalX... they're all blurring together into a muddy pile of mediocre extreme sports titles. So when another motocross game skids onto CVG's doormat we pray that there'll be something memorable, unique or compelling about it. Something to justify the madness.

Activision's new title is developed by the team that brought us Excitebike 64 way back on N64, but sadly experience is no substitute for inventiveness. For the most part MTX: Mototrax is motocross by numbers.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- NBA Courtside 2002 (GC)
- Backyard Football (GC)

HARD FACTS
- 13 real life pro riders including Travis Pastrana
- 24 levels to tear around
- You can create your own tracks and trade them with other players

DID YOU KNOW?
- Travis Pastrana has been immortalised as a 9.5in limited edition toy. Visit www.sxstore.com/motoheads and ship one from the US for a meagre $24.95 (£13.50)!

WHERE'S THE X-FACTOR?

Every extreme sports game and its dog uses Tony Hawk's 4 as a blueprint for structure, objectives and tricks. MTX is no different: a series of vast unlockable themed areas, in which you pick up challenges by speaking to misfits dotted around. There are extra supercross races and arena-based stunt objectives to complete, but the format feels about as fresh as a year-old kipper in a damp sock.

On the flipside the action is solid and the handling feels like the biking equivalent of NFS Underground – tight and satisfyingly arcadey. Plus it's real quick. Multiplayer races are often neck 'n' neck events. Good for a dip-in-dip-out online spurt, though you're unlikely to stick with it for long because of the repetitive track layouts.

Regardless of the decent handling, there's no escaping one of MTX's most annoying flaws: heaps of the objectives are startlingly samey. Wheelie this far; now wheelie a wee bit further; and so on till death washes over you. It's embarrassing that so little imagination has gone into the challenges, and the further you get into the game the less inspired you feel to continue.

"JUST ANOTHER AVERAGE BIKER ON THE MUDDY PILE OF FORGETTABLE EXTREME SPORTSTERS"

The handling feels awesome, but MTX is let down by its complete lack of new ideas

There's so much product placement in MTX it's sickening, which might explain our sudden urge for a Butterfinger

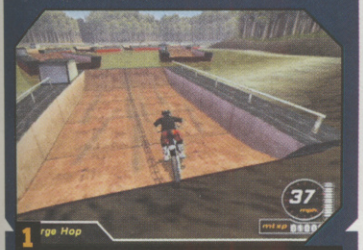
The online multiplayer mode pits you against up to seven riders across the globe

Only the hardcore could plug away at the career mode to unlock all the officially licensed merchandise. For the rest, MTX is just another average biker on the dirty pile of forgettable extreme sportsters. ✷

RECYCLING GONE BAD

It gets on our tits. Developer Left Field serves up some reasonably enjoyable challenges and then spoils it by recycling objectives, putting tiny twists on them in order to create new ones.

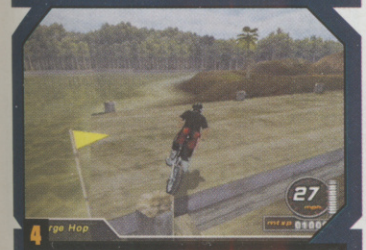
It's the easy option, and we're not going to be taken for a ride. It's like buying a CD that boasts 20 songs, but there are really only five – each version played slightly faster than the one before.



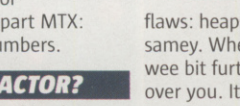
1 rge Hop
■ Select your route, rev her up and leap your way from barge to barge. Alone. So there's no mid-air argie-bargie...

2 rge Hop
■ Most of the challenges are hard as fossilized dino dumps and require multiple attempts to get them right

3 rge Hop
■ Squeeze the suspension and release it on the ramp to grab yourself a wee bit more height...



4 rge Hop
■ Made it! Congratulations, you made it. Now here's a novel idea: why not do it all again, only backwards!



CVG VERDICT

MIKE

GRAPHICS — 71
The levels are enormous but the visuals suffer because there's not enough detail

SOUND — 61
An over-familiar ear-bashing with another barrage of punk tracks and mediocre metal

GAMEPLAY — 62
The bike physics are decent enough, but the tricks system and game structure are tired

LASTING APPEAL — 55
Repetitive missions, samey tracks and dull levels. It won't keep you hanging on for long

The on-the-bike action is fast and instinctive, but the unoriginal challenges and uninspired environment layouts will leave your engine running a bit cold.

OVERALL SCORE 64

HOW IT COMPARES
MX UNLEASHED
MTX: MOTOTRAX
FREESTYLE METALX

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: COST: £14.99 PLAYERS: 1-4

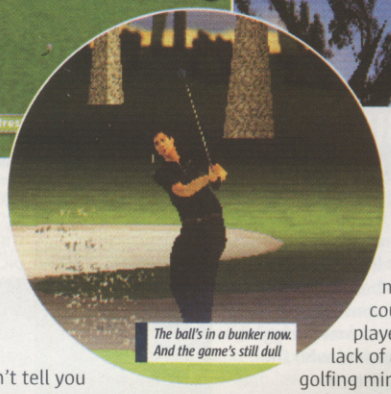
CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: OXYGEN INTERACTIVE
- DEV: AQUA PACIFIC
- WWW.OXYGENINT.COM
- CONTACT: 01933 391999

INTERNATIONAL GOLF PRO

This golfer's more of a mangy kitten than a Tiger

Generally you don't even have to read the green cos they're all so flat

The power and slice gauge uses the archaic old bar and swing combo. Ugh



The ball's in a bunker now. And the game's still dull

Cheap effects like lens flare can't mask the cack graphics or remedial gameplay

Yeah yeah, so it's cheap. But you can probably pick up one of EA's Tiger Woods games from a couple of years back for the same or less money – and have a lot more fun with it.

See, there's quite a lot wrong with International Golf Pro. Swinging is moronic; you simply press the button when the power bar passes over the two lines on the gauge in the bottom right. Your non-licensed on-screen golfing hero automatically lines himself up with the pin. This helps novices but it also means you can win every hole on par by simply pressing the shot button twice. No aiming, no club swapping, no thinking.

The ball physics are bizarre. A clean long shot results in the ball hitting the ground with a thud and stopping dead, rather than rolling as it would in reality. Mysterious disembodied applause ripples out after a successful shot but we couldn't tell you where it comes from – there are no spectators on the unimaginative courses, only badly drawn trees and bland textures.

With no caddy tips, the lack of a decent swing mechanic, no licensed courses or players and the lack of any fun golfing mini-games seen in other titles, there's no reason you'd ever need this when you can play Tiger Woods or even Mario Golf. ✷

CVG VERDICT

This adds absolutely nothing to the golf sim genre, and looks and plays like something from the Dark Ages of gaming. Utterly pointless.

OVERALL SCORE: 20

HOW IT COMPARES
- LINKS 2004
- INT GOLF PRO
- TIGER WOODS 2004

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: COST: £29.99 PLAYERS: 1-6

CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: ATARI
- DEV: CYBERLORE STUDIOS
- WWW.US.ATARI.COM/GAMES/RISK_PS2_FAMILY/
- CONTACT: 020 8222 9700

ONLINE GAMING:
- PLAY THE REGULAR GAME ONLINE WITH UP TO FIVE RIVALS

RISK GLOBAL DOMINATION

Converting boring board games into videogames is a Risk-y business

Another free CVG gift! Cut out and keep your very own Risk pin map! Or not. It's up to you

Board games are dull. We know this because most of them have been around for decades, from a time when people hadn't heard of consoles or computers. Instead the poor souls had to make do with chucking dice and moving counters around a board to stop people from eating each other out of sheer boredom.

So it's little wonder that practically every attempt to bring a crusty old board game 'classic' kicking and screaming into the digital age has been a spectacular failure. Risk is no exception. The game offers little you can't do with the real-life game, and instead thinks that adding over the top battle animations is enough to satisfy gamers.

Where Risk really falls flat on its arse is that it forces you to watch the AI-controlled turns. With just yourself playing and five other AI rivals, you can be sitting inactive for up to five minutes at a time, take your turn, then wait another five minutes to have another go. This is acceptable with real board games because, as everyone knows, they're crap. But in a videogame it's inexcusable. Throw in endlessly repeated army catchphrases that are shite even the first time you hear them and you've got a candidate for most torturous board game conversion ever. ✷

So boring you'll start admiring the pieces

Planning stages don't make for fun screenshots or exciting gameplay. It's rubbish!

The presentation is nice and everything but where's the fun, man?

CVG VERDICT

Only die-hard Risk fans (if such a breed exists at all) will care about this and even then, playing the board game is better than this bilge.

OVERALL SCORE: 28

HOW IT COMPARES
- MARIO PARTY 5
- RISK: GLOB DOM
- SCRABBLE 2003

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
COST: £29.99
PLAYERS: 1-64 (LAN)

CONTACT INFO
* PUB: ELECTRONIC ARTS * DEV: DICE
* WWW.EAGAMES.COM/OFFICIAL/BATTLEFIELD/VIETNAM/US/HOME.JSP
* CONTACT: 01932 450000

ONLINE GAMING
* 1-64 PLAYERS
* MODES INCLUDE INSTANT BATTLE, CONQUEST (CAPTURE AND HOLD), EVOLUTION (LINKED MAPS)

PC CD ROM

You can give the bots orders but you'll probably just be ignored as they have their own AI

Tanks are hard bastards but slow-moving, so you're both protected yet hampered. Boo!

Choppers can carry vehicles and drop them on the enemy's heads or for teammates to scramble into

Drop some napalm bombs for an instant barbeque. You'll get used to the stink of singed flesh

BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM

Hot, humid and packing sweet weapons, it's multiplayer bliss

TICKET TO RIDE

It's the vehicles that make Battlefield Vietnam the experience to savour.

There are more planes, trains and automobiles than even John Candy and Steve Martin could handle. Apart from the trains. In fact it's more like planes, tanks and rocket-firing mobiles. Which would have been a much better film, we reckon.

1 ■ Vietnam wouldn't be Vietnam without choppers with teeth. They're hard to fly, so the remember bail-out key

2 ■ Boats are vital to 'Nam. Here you and your team can ride up the lazy river... and then be shot by snipers

3 ■ Tanks aren't too good in the jungle, but can still pack a powerful punch to anyone stupid enough to get too near

4 ■ Scooters won't offer any protection, but you can dart in and out of the enemy, with your passenger firing at will

Face it, two-on-two combat isn't bad, but nothing quite beats seeing thirty-odd armed soldiers screaming over a hill, guns blazing, rock 'n' roll music blaring, all charging at you with the simple intention of gutting you like a kipper and moving on. That's REAL combat and that's Battlefield Vietnam.

Luckily, you won't be spending days studying tactical manuals and strategic texts, formulating complex battle plans and memorising a dozen different keyboard commands for 'advance'. Even though you can have up to thirty-two players on each side, all you have to worry about is pointing your gun, tank, helicopter or plane at the enemy and pressing fire. The rest of your team will either be made up of internetting human warriors doing their own thing or above-average bots.

PREVIOUS GAMES
■ Motorhead, Rallisport Challenge, Codename Eagle, Battlefield 1942

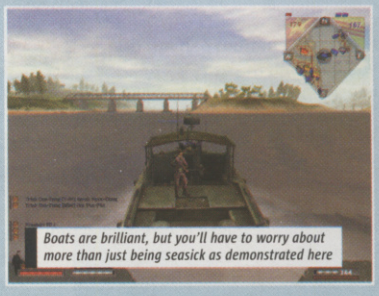
HARD FACTS
■ 14 maps all based on real battles
■ Play your own music from the choppers
■ Mix any combination of bots and humans online

DID YOU KNOW?
■ The average age of the US soldier in Vietnam was nnnnn-nineteen.

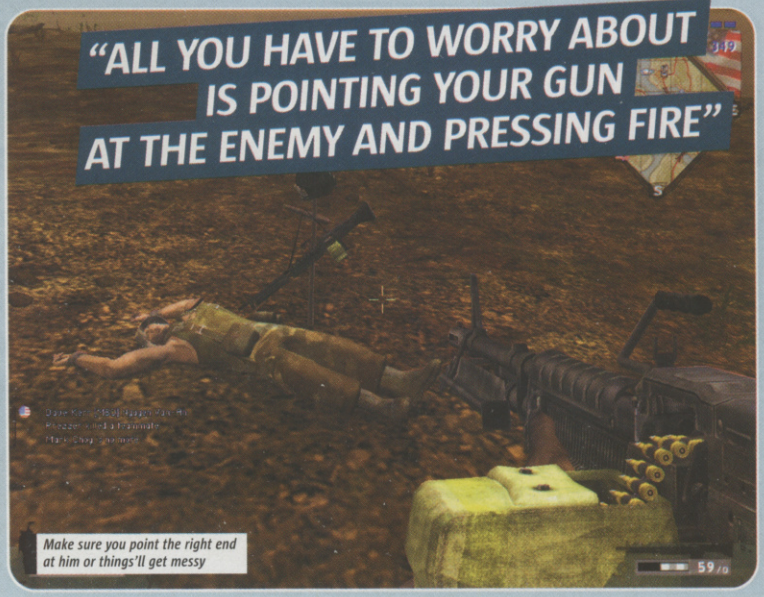
ARMOUR-GEDDON

One of the best things about the Battlefield series has always been the mix of weapons and vehicles. Here you get to mess around with all sorts of Sixties-era human-mashing hardware, from two-man tanks to big old choppers that can swoop in over the horizon with the Apocalypse Now soundtrack blaring out of their speakers and jeeps dangling crazily from chains beneath.

The atmosphere is absolutely brilliant. Every Hollywood film ever made about the Vietnam war is crammed in here somehow. From the music on the loading screens to the "Go home GI" messages broadcast over loudspeakers in an effort to unhinge your allies' fragile American minds.



Boats are brilliant, but you'll have to worry about more than just being seasick as demonstrated here



Make sure you point the right end at him or things'll get messy

MOVE IT, SOLDIER

Anyone who played Battlefield 1942 will be familiar with the huge, open maps and unfocussed gameplay. Vietnam has fixed this with tighter, more balanced maps and a definite sense of where the battle is currently taking place.

Whether you're defending a rope bridge from tanks or escaping from of a napalm-bombed jungle, Battlefield Vietnam is constantly grabbing you by the knackers and screaming thrills into your ears like a demented drill sergeant.

You will need a full-on broadband connection to appreciate it, and running 64 players, on or offline, does require a hefty computer to avoid it becoming a turn-based jerk-o-rama. But when it comes to in-your-face, down and dirty, always moving, relentless action combat – few do it better than the boys in the Battlefield. *

Jungles are the most common map type (well it is Vietnam!) and spooky as shit

PAUL P

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 88
Lush jungle foliage and ace-looking hardware. Love that camo 'nade-launcher!

SOUND 93
Utterly cool (make that groooovy, man) music and scarily brilliant sound effects

GAMEPLAY 85
Best in multiplayer with loads of others. Solo play is less rewarding

LASTING APPEAL 80
Plenty of map variety and the game always packs a few surprises

Brilliant multiplayer combat with a great sense of being 'in' the jungle. No campaign mode lessens the one-player game but it can't be beat online.

OVERALL SCORE 88

HOW IT COMPARES
BATTLEFIELD 1942
BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM
VIETCONG

RELEASE DATE
NOW

GAME INFO
COST: £34.99
PLAYERS: 1 (32 LAN)

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: UBISOFT
- DEV: CRYTEK
- WWW.FARCRY-THEGAME.COM
- CONTACT: 01932 838230

ONLINE GAMING
- 1-32 PLAYERS
- MODES INCLUDE: FREE FOR ALL, TEAM DEATHMATCH, AND ASSAULT MODE (ONE TEAM ASSAULTS RIVAL'S DEFENCES)

FAR CRY

Sun, sea, sand and shotguns. Wish you were here?

Well, if you leave a jeep next to a petrol tank then you're asking for trouble, in our opinion

I only want to borrow the hang-glider! I'll give it back! Promise!

Sure is a nice place to die. Shame about the death though

Why do all the mercs wear such tight-fitting clothing?

Bank holidays are rubbish: they're all melted ice-creams, burning hot sand and having to stand in the sea and whistle innocently when you need to take a piss. Jack Carver, ex-marine and owner of a boat charter business in the sunny paradise of Micronesia, isn't particularly fond of beaches either.

But that's mainly because there's an army of mercenaries intent on filling him with bullet holes wherever he looks. Not to mention more than a couple of genetically-tampered mutants roaming around, intent on ripping the face off anything that moves – whether they're a goodie, a baddie or just a confused tourist.

THUNDER IN PARADISE

What makes Far Cry different from other shooters is that it gives you loads of freedom to do what you want to do. Levels plonk you down on the edge of an island paradise, tell you where you should be heading and leave most of the thinking up to you. You sit there in your boat, get out your super-binoculars (which also let you listen in on conversations, even if your targets are only talking about what they're gonna cook for their tea) and plan your assault.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

This freedom is terrific. You could steal that boat, arm the rocket launcher and lay waste to the plebs on the beach or you can sneak up that ledge, find a spot to lie down and snipe off enemies' limbs. Maybe you could creep around, throw rocks to distract nearby mercenaries and then club 'em from behind, or you could go over to another beach and dodge all the gun-toting nasties completely.

The list of attack possibilities is impressive, and charging in all guns blazing will ALWAYS end up with you chewing on bloody sand dune. As will the mercenaries' habit of spotting you and running for back-up, or sending up a distress flare or slamming an alarm – which in turn calls in a couple of attack choppers armed with mini-guns and blood-crazed soldiers to help them crush your one man crusade. Ouch.

Behind you! Behind you! Oh, too late, you've been royally frigged

CLEVER BOYS...

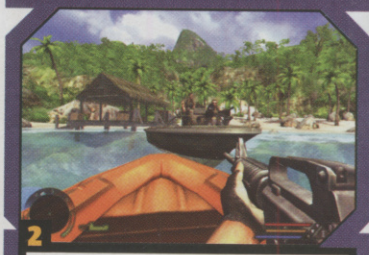
Most shooters have rubbish AI and, while you will occasionally see a merc-under-fire who's waddling around like a constipated man in search of a bowl of Bran Flakes, the villains in this game are far and away

HAS IT GOT VA-VA-VOOM?

Driving in the real world is pretty fun, but there aren't enough guns. Far Cry will have you racing around in all sorts of wheeled death-machines, making things explode, driving off cliffs and making you giggle like a school-girl.

Of course they're not really yours, so you can expect a fair number of boat-chases and jeep battles when you pinch a merc's motor.

1 ■ Armed with rocket-launcher and mini-gun, the jeep is the top choice for an island paradise's hero-about-town


2 ■ Gunless and basic, the dinghy can nevertheless provide some exhilarating ocean-bound larks

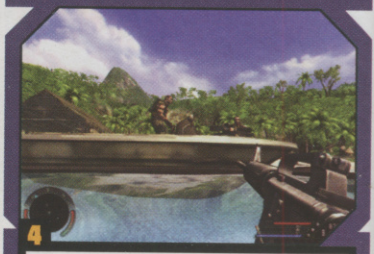
The No Cars On The Beach rule is strictly enforced

Mercenaries fight off the mutants – but they like YOU even less

"THE TRIGEN MUTANTS HAVE BEEN COOKED UP BY A CACKLING EVIL SCIENTIST. AND THEY'RE BLOODY SCARY"

These guys soak up a ridiculous amount of bullets. Do 'em a favour – aim for the face

3 ■ Get from a mountaintop to the bottom of a valley with your handy hang-glider. Mind the helicopters though


4 ■ With rockets, machine-gun and ridiculous acceleration, patrol boats are by far the most thrilling ride available

■ Physics is the most boring lesson on earth, we all know that, but if teachers used Far Cry to explain stuff then it would be fun, fun, fun!

JUST KEEP ROLLIN, ROLLIN, ROLLIN!

Baddies fly everywhere, barrels roll down hills, explosions throw Trigens miles skywards and massive cylindrical tanks are handy...

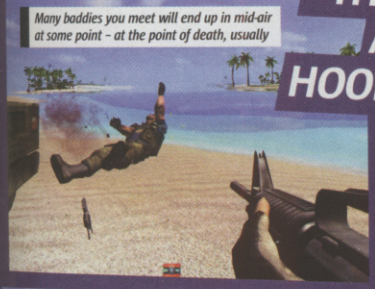
Hmm. These guys look pretty tooled up. It'd be ace if we could kill 'em all and not get our hands dirty

What's this? A gigantic storage tank that creaks? What happens if I shoot here...

Haha! Didn't expect that did you, you gun-toting goons! Eat rolling death!

Just to rub it in all the more we'll nick your jeep as well. Like that do ya?

"THE VILLAINS IN THIS GAME ARE FAR AND AWAY CLEVERER THAN ANY HOODLUM WE'VE SEEN IN YEARS"



Many baddies you meet will end up in mid-air at some point – at the point of death, usually

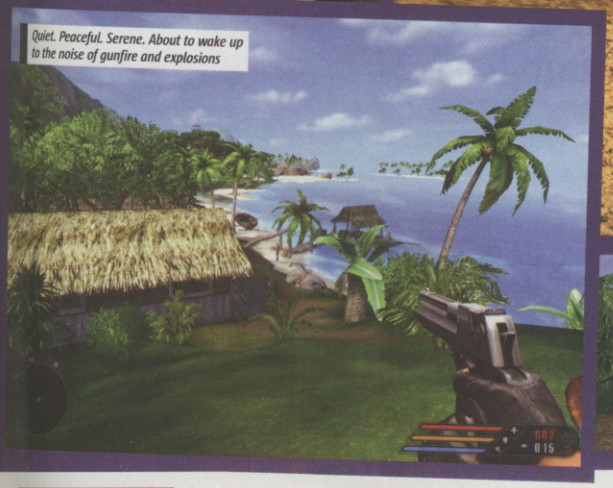
They may look like brawny meatheads, but they'll use sneaky teamwork to nail you

Let the Trigens out of their cages and unleash chaos!

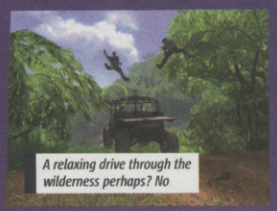
SEE I WHE-HEY!

Jack Carver's token eye-candy is Val Cortez, a journalist with a shady past (surely not) with the CIA and an absolutely cracking arse.

Men in white coats are ALWAYS evil, they teach this in schools now



Quiet. Peaceful. Serene. About to wake up to the noise of gunfire and explosions



A relaxing drive through the wilderness perhaps? No

The doctors failed to remove the appendix from the poorly Trigen

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Engalus (PC)
- Silent Space (PC)
- X-Isle (PC)

HARD FACTS
- 20 massive levels
- 15-20 hours of gameplay
- An infinite number of grains of sand

DID YOU KNOW?
- Originally Far Cry was destined to feature Jurassic Park style dinos, but the decision was made to have badass mutants instead. Maybe we could have dinos for the sequel?

cleverer than any hoodlum we've seen in years. They run, they hide, they draw your fire while their buddy sneaks round your side and puts a bullet in your neck. They even have leaders who shout to them where you're hiding and where he wants 'em to go. All this means that the game is pretty damn hard, but when you die you won't care that much 'cos you'll love playing the same cool levels all over again!

These poor sods have no idea what is about to hit them

WHAT THE... ?

The island setting in Far Cry is essentially Jurassic Park, only instead of rampaging dinos eating everything in their path you've got a bunch of Trigen mutants who've been cooked up by a cackling evil scientist. And they're bloody scary. Even the smallest ones, the squeakers, can leap about twenty feet and rip out your guts in two hits. By the time you get to the fatboys (huge, heavily armoured freaks with rocket-launchers), no amount of Ariel Ultra will ever be able to remove the cack from your pants.

IN THE X-FIRE

These badasses are in the process of breaking out of their compounds when you turn up, and the best bits of the game feature all-out war between the soldiers and the Trigens. With you smack in the middle of it all, you've double the chance of getting a pasting.

Freshly barbecued Trigen Carcass. There's no finer meal

If we're gonna get critical then it's fair to say that the levels that take place indoors (almost a third of the game) aren't quite as good as the outdoor ones and the cut-scenes can be so fast and so bizarre that you don't know what the hell is going on. But, overall, the game is just so goddamn good that it doesn't matter. And did we mention it was beautiful? Who needs holidays when you can load Far Cry and soak up some rays? ✷

CVG 2ND OPINION

PETE

Sure, the story's shallow and, like Wolfenstein or True Crime, not everyone'll love the direction it takes (think The Island Of Dr Moreau). But hey, at least it's not another fekkin' WWII or Vietnam shooter. Clever channelling means the sense of freedom the huge locations give you is often more of an illusion, keeping the action tight enough to keep you hooked.

CVG VERDICT

WILL

GRAPHICS — 94
Visuals so lovely you'll hug your PC – when Jack's outdoors, at least

SOUND — 90
You'll be knocking over stuff just to hear the 'Clang!' noise. Fantastic!

GAMEPLAY — 90
Slows down in the middle, but otherwise topnotch stuff

LASTING APPEAL — 89
With five difficulty settings, you'll definitely want to play it again

Gob-smacking both in looks and smarts. The story stutters a bit, but you'll be so busy fighting you'll hardly care. The best PC shooter we've seen in ages.

OVERALL SCORE 91

HOW IT COMPARES
CALL OF DUTY
FAR CRY
MEDAL OF HONOR: AA

MIGHTY CHOPPERS

Most shooters use choppers as bosses, but in Far Cry you battle them from start to finish. Whether you're blasting 'em out of the sky from a vehicle or sniping out their gunners, they're a joy to fight.

In fact, the penultimate level is a thrilling river race that pits you against loads of them, as well as more than a couple of rival speedboats and tons of bazooka-waving infantry. Bring it on!

■ This metal monster has a gunner who could shoot your head off in one go. What are you waiting for?

■ Waiting to gain entry to a mercenary stronghold, this Blackhawk tries to make a mess out of ya!

■ Plane flies over, mercs come out, you kick ass. Or run away, find a nice quiet sandy cove and get a tan

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO	ONLINE GAMING	EXTRAS
NOW	COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1	✳ PUB: ATARI ✳ DEV: TANTALUS ✳ WWW.UNREAL2.COM ✳ CONTACT: 020 8222 9700	✳ TWO-PLAYER CO-OP STORY MODE, 1-16 PLAYERS XMP MODE	✳ XBOX LIVE/HEADSET

XBOX

It's one thing to imitate the opening of Half-Life, but this Fabian Barthez cameo is just bad

Of all the aliens we've shot to save mankind, this Izarian is one of the worst looking by far

Unreal II excels in the complex architecture of the levels and great use of lighting

UNREAL II THE AWAKENING

A sci-fi shooter with breathtaking scenery and aliens... Sound familiar?

Tired of playing Halo for the umpteenth time? Sick of counting down the (STILL unconfirmed) days to the sequel? Sounds like you need a quick pick-me-up, something that offers the same adrenaline rush of alien-popping action and sci-fi weaponry. That something could well be Unreal II: The Awakening.

Fans of UT on the Xbox looking for more of the same should approach the PC port of Unreal II with a small amount of caution. It's very much a single-player experience with an absorbing mission-based Story mode and just a sprinkling of online play.

PUMP LOVER

Unreal II offers everything you'd expect from a sci-fi FPS. There are different races of aliens, each with their own unique look, weaponry and abilities. There's a stunning selection of planets, sci-fi machinery and dark industrial corridors. Then there's you – a space marine with a gruff voice and a love for pumping plasma into anything that steps in your way. It hardly rocks the boat of convention, but when did that get in the way of enjoyment?

This is an FPS where every rivet of the monstrous scenery gleams. Each alien planet looks so good that you spend half the time searching for postcard stalls. The weaponry also impresses. The flame-thrower produces a fire effect that's so convincing you'll want to toast marshmallows on it. The only downside to the single-player game is the length. Experienced veterans should stroll through the action in around ten hours.

A NEW LIFE AWAITS YOU

Online there's the XMP mode. Essentially it's Capture The Flag with two teams searching for alien artefacts they must return to their base. Four huge maps really add to the enjoyment, as do the smattering of vehicles, gun turrets, force fields and mines. The way you must take control of generators to power these toys adds a great strategical element to battles.

With a short single-player mode and a child-sized portion of online play, Unreal II will really test the allegiance of fans. It's not for everyone, but is still a decent way to blast your way through a few hours. ✳

PREVIOUS GAMES

- South Park Rally, Area 51

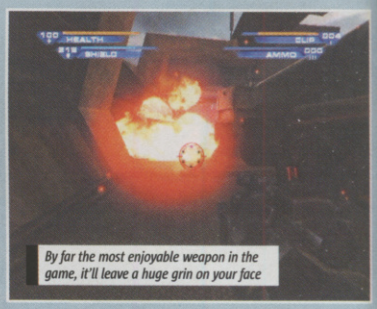
HARD FACTS

- 2 vehicles available online only
- 2 classes of Soldier, Ranger, Gunner or Tech
- 4 massive multiplayer maps
- 7 alien weapons
- 8 human weapons

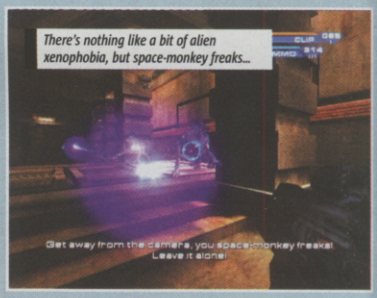
DID YOU KNOW?

- The human weaponry in Unreal II looks futuristic, but the designs are based on current technology. The Grace pistol, for instance, is based on a .50-calibre Magnum handgun.

Stop shooting him you psycho sicko, he's already dead like ten times over



By far the most enjoyable weapon in the game, it'll leave a huge grin on your face



IT'S LIFE JIM, BUT...

For all the graphical prowess of Unreal II, there is one vital area that lets the side down.

The aliens! You'd think that in a sci-fi FPS they'd be treated with care, but it seems they've been created by a bunch of grannies who read Cross Stitch Monthly. We like their designs, it's just they don't look up to scratch next to the detailed backdrops.

1 ■ Unreal II is good at setting up surprises, and that includes the introduction of each alien species

2 ■ Good job this alien is hiding in the shadows as you can't see that he's been drawn with an Etch-A-Sketch

3 ■ Nice backgrounds, but why do the aliens look so blocky? Maybe the designers were playing Tetris?

4 ■ The closer you get, the blockier they become. Stay back – you don't want to become some alien's bitch

Don't admire the scenery too much, or you'll miss the sneaky aliens taking up a good position on you

ALEX H'S CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 82
The locations are awesome – pity the aliens aren't up to the same high standard

SOUND 81
Lots of dialogue, alien growls and heavy gunfire, as you'd expect

GAMEPLAY 85
It's a bit generic, but there are great set-pieces and some nice surprises

LASTING APPEAL 81
You'll fly through single-player, but the online options add depth and longevity

Well made and super-slick, Unreal II will please shooter fans – but it doesn't boast that sprinkling of magic to make it a genuine must-have Xbox title.

OVERALL SCORE 80

HOW IT COMPARES
HALO
UNREAL II
BRUTE FORCE

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
COST: £34.99
PLAYERS: 1

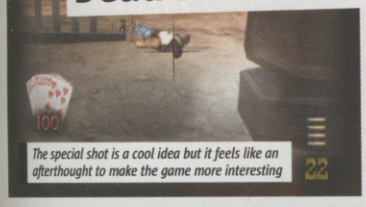
CONTACT INFO
- PUB: ATARI
- DEV: HUMAN HEAD
- WWW.DMHGAME.COM
- CONTACT: 020 8222 9700

ONLINE GAMING
- 1-8 PLAYERS
- MODES INCLUDE DEATHMATCH, TEAM DEATHMATCH, BOUNTY (ALL AGAINST ONE) AND POSSE (ALL AGAINST THE AI)

XBOX | PC CD ROM

DEAD MAN'S HAND

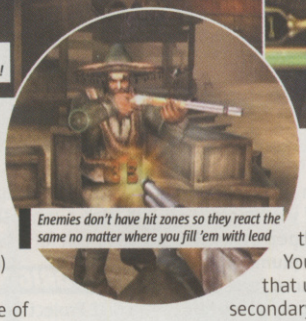
Like Westerns? Wait for Red Dead Revolver instead


The special shot is a cool idea but it feels like an afterthought to make the game more interesting

Boss shoot-out! But hide on the stairs and he can't aim at you. Dur!

Shoot the rope to bring this guy crashing down to earth, stunning him and leaving him vulnerable

Grab dynamite and lob it at the idiotic enemies. They don't explode though as there's no gore in the game


Enemies don't have hit zones so they react the same no matter where you fill 'em with lead

Crouched behind a cart loaded with explosives, the sun is scorching your neck and the buzz of flies is putting you off your aim. You need a tequila or a dirty great cigar.

But you can't, you're in the middle of a bloody tale of vengeance and need to cap as many gringos as you can, as stylishly as you can. Hat-shots count, crush kills too (where you shoot objects above goons to squash 'em like chewing tobacco) and you can even push a bomb cart toward a posse of enemies and blast it so it ignites on the way to meet its doomed targets.

So why, with such a strong premise, cool set-pieces and sweet rewards for sharp shooting does Dead Man's Hand fail? The biggest problem is that, as a shooter, it just feels so old. Progress through levels is painfully linear. Enemies appear in the same spot each and every time and they have terrible AI too. You can charge a power bar that unleashes a special secondary shot by successfully blasting objects and enemies in quick succession, but the frame rate is so shoddy that you'll struggle to aim carefully at all. Online it's better because you're playing against fellow, non-idiotic humans, but there are clearly far better FPSs out there that deserve your cash. ✷

Poorly put together, it offers little you couldn't find in shooters five years ago. Next to Halo it's pretty much irrelevant, despite the Wild West setting.

OVERALL SCORE **55**

HOW IT COMPARES
- HALO
- DEAD MAN'S HAND
- UNREAL II

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
COST: £29.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: ATARI
- DEV: PARADIGM ENTERTAINMENT
- WWW.MI-GAME.COM
- 020 8222 9700

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE OPERATION SURMA

A stealth game out on Cube AFTER Twin Snakes? Now THAT'S Impossible

How cool? Though quite why Ethan isn't ever spotted while shimmying in full view doesn't make much sense to us

Use cool binoculars to take photos and earwig guards' tedious conversations

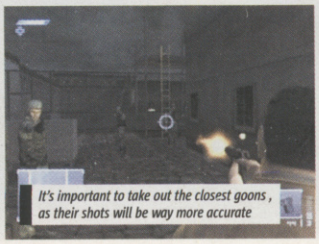
He's got a better-looking stealth suit than Sam and more cool gadgets than Snake. But Ethan Hawk's adventure lacks the atmosphere that makes Splinter Cell or MGS slicker than the average stealther.

Based in the Mission: Impossible world of the recent films (but without pint-sized Cruise), Operation Surma throws every stealth game convention into the mix to create a satisfying but overly familiar-feeling action game. From shimmying along pipes to sneaking behind enemies, you've seen it all before. That's not to say it isn't fun – it's just that it doesn't stamp its own mark of individuality onto the stealth game clichés like MGS or Splinter Cell do.

It's been designed for casual players. Everything's streamlined: simple controls, items are selected automatically and guards crumble without much of a fight. You never get stuck, but you blast through the whole thing dead quick.

Crucially, Surma's been out on PS2 and Xbox for months, and while this Cube version adds a few minor tweaks, the delayed release means it's out after Twin Snakes. So only go for this if you already own the best in the genre. ✷

Pressing the attack button when Ethan is running unleashes a flurry of ultra-violent kicks. Like ballet, but much tougher


It's important to take out the closest goons, as their shots will be way more accurate

Using the night vision ability is a simple button press away and essential for spotting laser mines

Fun but it will be all too familiar if you've played a stealth game before. Lacks that special spark but it's still enjoyable and mostly fun.

OVERALL SCORE **68**

HOW IT COMPARES
- MGS THE TWIN SNAKES
- MISSION IMPOSSIBLE
- SPLINER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

RELEASE DATE
30 APRIL

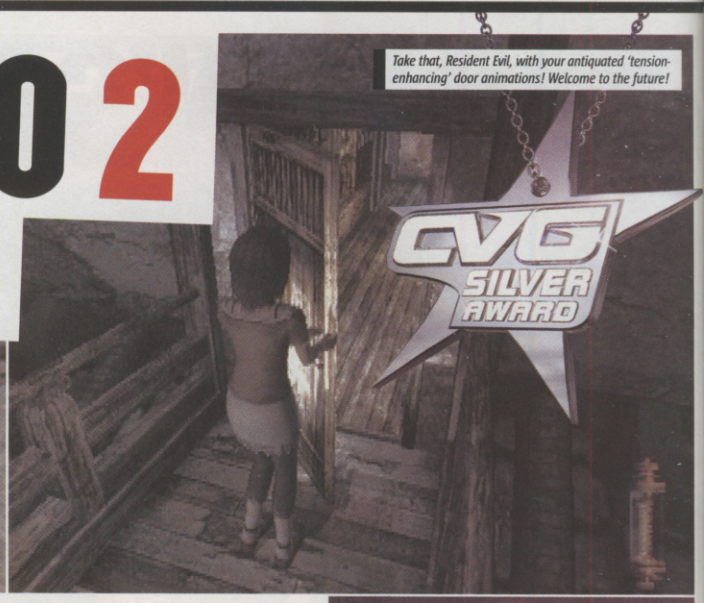
GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
* PUB: UBISOFT
* DEV: TECMO
* WWW.TECMOINC.COM/GAMES/FF2.ASP
* CONTACT: 01932 838230

PROJECT ZERO 2
CRIMSON BUTTERFLY

That's it baby, give me pure unrelenting terror! Show me wide-eyed fear... Click!

Everything goes black 'n' white-o-vision when things switch to these playable psychic visions



Take that, Resident Evil, with your antiquated 'tension-enhancing' door animations! Welcome to the future!

SHRIEK FOR THE CAMERA

Hunt out Spirit Stones and gain points by snapping the spooks loitering in shadowy corners. That's the way to beef up your shutter-box as quickly as possible.

Even then, you'll need to cunningly choose the right film type and upgrades if you're going to exorcise the crafty, camera-shy demonic deluge effectively. Don't forget to say cheese!

1
■ Deep in the heart of the shrine, you'll encounter the spirits of children sacrificed by the village elders

2
■ They're nimble little buggers though, and their idea of playtime involves ripping your throat out

3
■ Equip your camera's Slow function to stand any chance of catching their speedy asses on film

4
■ With the right augmentations in place, wiping the fang-toothed smile off their stupid faces is a doddle

Being a girl in videogames is rubbish. If you're not being kidnapped by a 20ft lizard with a plumber complex, you're forced into a catsuit so tight, the only place left to stick your pistol is gonna make your eyes water. Try running too fast and your colossal boob-physics will give you concussion – and that's if you haven't been plucked from civilisation to satiate the jaws of some slathering hell-beast in a sacrificial ritual of the Apocalypse.

So when the stars of Tecmo's survival horror prequel turn out to be not one, but TWO wide-eyed and innocent schoolgirl sisters, you know the brown stuff'll be hitting the fan in no time. Say hello to Mayu and Mio – trapped in a desolate mountaintop village tottering on the very brink of hell, they're slaughter-fodder for the tormented inhabitants forced to relive their grisly demise until a long-forgotten ritual can be completed – and, slap our goose-bumped thighs, if that doesn't call for a twin sister sacrifice.

ORIGINAL SINNER

The first Project Zero shook the cobwebs off the staid survival horror genre, creeping well away from Resident Evil's B-movie zombie action and Silent Hill's psycho-sexual nastiness with its chilling blend of traditional ghostly scares and innovative camera combat. Think a rampaging undead corpse is frightening when you've got its nostrils wedged up your shotgun muzzle? Try exorcising demons with nowt but the ghostbusting equivalent of a Kodak camera and see how fast your pants turn streaky.

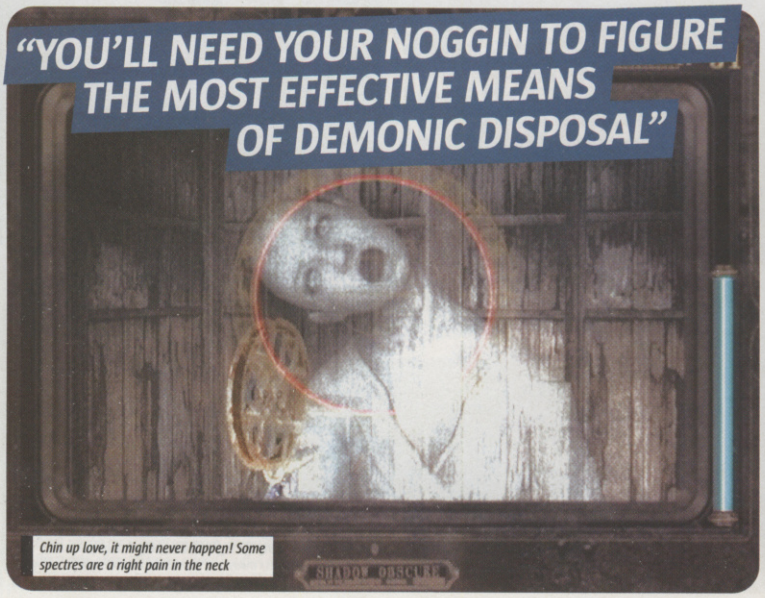
CLICK-SNAP AWAY!

Spirit-snapping is a doddle in principle – point your lens at the feisty phantom and click! The niftier your framing, the closer your target and the stronger your film type, the better the soul-sucking potential of your camera. Get everything perfect and you'll strike a Fatal Frame – guaranteed to blast the bogeymen back to the beyond in no time. Unlike the original game though, the antiquated camera takes time to reload, leaving you vulnerable while it faffs back into action.

Thankfully, reloads can be shortened, and new abilities augmented, by locating Spirit Stones as you travel – widen the lens to trap more targets, slow down marauding monsters or even expose sneakily invisible horrors. The upgrade system kicks in much earlier than before too, due in large part to the much fruitier spirit menace – you'll need your noggin to

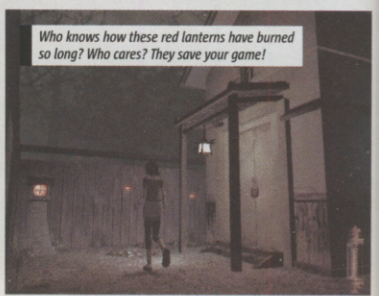
Either there's something eerie about those butterflies or there's a rogue nuclear plant nearby

"YOU'LL NEED YOUR NOGGIN TO FIGURE THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF DEMONIC DISPOSAL"



Chin up love, it might never happen! Some spectres are a right pain in the neck

Spooky film footage from beyond the grave! You can shut your eyes at the scary bit



Who knows how these red lanterns have burned so long? Who cares? They save your game!

■ Project Zero 2 sports a quivering casket of sneaky set pieces to get your pulse flowing and your trousers filling. You'll need to stay

FREAKY THEATRICS

on your guard if you want to minimise the chances of heart palpitations. Keep your ghostbustin' camera to hand – you'll need it!

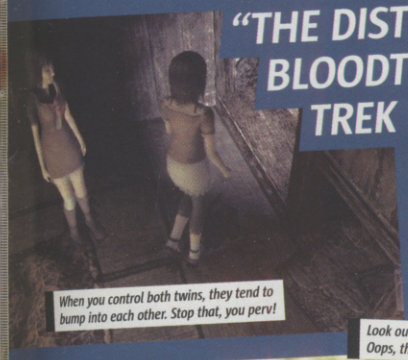
Deep into the village, you'll cross this foggy lake. The gentle lap of waves isn't the only sound you'll hear...

Halfway, the wails of a drowning woman fill the air – snap her spirit back to the afterlife

Don't be fooled by the silence... there's something nasty on the other side

Call that gratitude? One successful exorcism and all she can do is maul your face off

"THE DISTURBINGLY SICK PLOT AND BEAUTIFULLY BLOODTHIRSTY PRESENTATION MAKE FOR A TREK THROUGH A TERRIFYING WORLD"



When you control both twins, they tend to bump into each other. Stop that, you perv!

Look out Mio – she's got a knife back there! Oops, there goes the ending... only kidding

Remember – if you're feeling lonely in a hellish damned village, never ask for a hug

Never turn your back on yokels with pointy sticks – ain't you seen Deliverance?

Keep smiling and she won't know the murderous undead priest is behind her

Bloody girls, eh? Even in the face of certain doom, they have to stop for a tidy-up

THE BROWN RING

The jump-cut style owes a lot to the new wave of Japanese horror movies – most obviously, Hideo Nakata's terror-on-the-telly series of 'Ring' movies.

This guy wants to help. Trouble is, he thinks you're someone else and looks a right tit

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ Ninja Gaiden, Rygar, DOA Xtreme Volleyball, Dead Or Alive 3

HARD FACTS

■ Ten nerve-shredding chapters of icy horror
■ Six upgradeable camera components with eight levels of power-up each

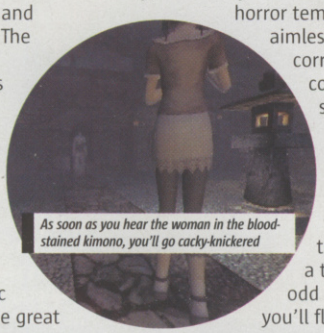
DID YOU KNOW?

■ A real camera obscura is a tiny hole in a darkened room used to project images from outside onto the opposite wall. The concept is said to have been created by Chinese philosopher Mo-Ti in the 5th Century BC, and was a guaranteed crowd-puller in Victorian times.

figure the most effective means of demonic disposal as ghosts flit nimbly around you.

DEMON TWEAKS

It's not just the combat system that's been overhauled either. Nearly everything's been refined – from the interface, now as slick as a skinned baby in an offal factory, to the gripping and relentless plot. The new graphics engine conjures up some sublimely sinister moments too, swapping the claustrophobic confines of the original for a much more epic adventure in the great outdoors. Even the in-game characters look and move far more convincingly than before – the fetid undead have never been so gorgeously gruesome.



As soon as you hear the woman in the blood-stained kimono, you'll go cacky-knickered

BAD BLOOD

The main gripe with the game is that it still sticks a little too closely to the traditional survival horror template – wander aimlessly along spooky corridors, search for countless keys and solve arbitrary sliding block-style puzzles. There are a few minor control issues to grapple with, too. Although the 3D set-up works a treat, there's the odd moment when you'll fly off in the wrong direction as the camera switches angles. It still beats the thumb-horror of Silent Hill and Resi, though. Occasionally too, your sibling shimmies into your path and refuses to budge – it doesn't happen all that often but it's annoying nonetheless.

Ultimately, Project Zero 2 is the kind of sequel that actually manages to improve on its predecessor in just about every conceivable way. The streamlined gameplay mechanics, disturbingly sick plot and beautifully bloodthirsty presentation make for a tense, if occasionally slow-paced, trek through a terrifying world. Action freaks and survival horror-haters should probably still stay clear, but if you're looking for a deep, disturbing slice of mature horror then you should... uh... snap this up. ✷

EASY-PEASY PUZZLES

Sadly, one area where the game doesn't deviate from the usual survival horror guff is in its bounty of puzzles.

Mostly, you'll be running back and forth carrying keys about the game world. Occasionally though, things pick up for some deeper, though far from taxing, puzzle elements. Trust us, you won't need to be a member of MENSA.

■ As you explore the Ceremony Master's shack, you find terrifying chronicles of the village rituals

■ They're not just there for browsing – match the content of each volume up with this riddle

■ The plinth will slide open, showering you with untold wealth and riches. Well... a key. Hooray!

CVG 2ND OPINION

LEE

It's a great game, but at the same time I don't really want to play it very much. It's just too nasty and upsetting. Silent Hill and Resi are grotty in their own way of course, but neither of those is anywhere near as harrowing as Project Zero 2. Call me old-fashioned, but playing games should be enjoyable. This is just too damned weird and disturbing to be described as fun.

CVG VERDICT

MATT

GRAPHICS — 84
Lush, sinister environments and pant-browning cinematics

SOUND — 93
Gorgeous orchestrations and genuinely chilling sound effects and voices

GAMEPLAY — 87
Still stuck in survival horror squalor but tense, innovative and refined

LASTING APPEAL — 76
There's about ten hours of terror here, but little replay value

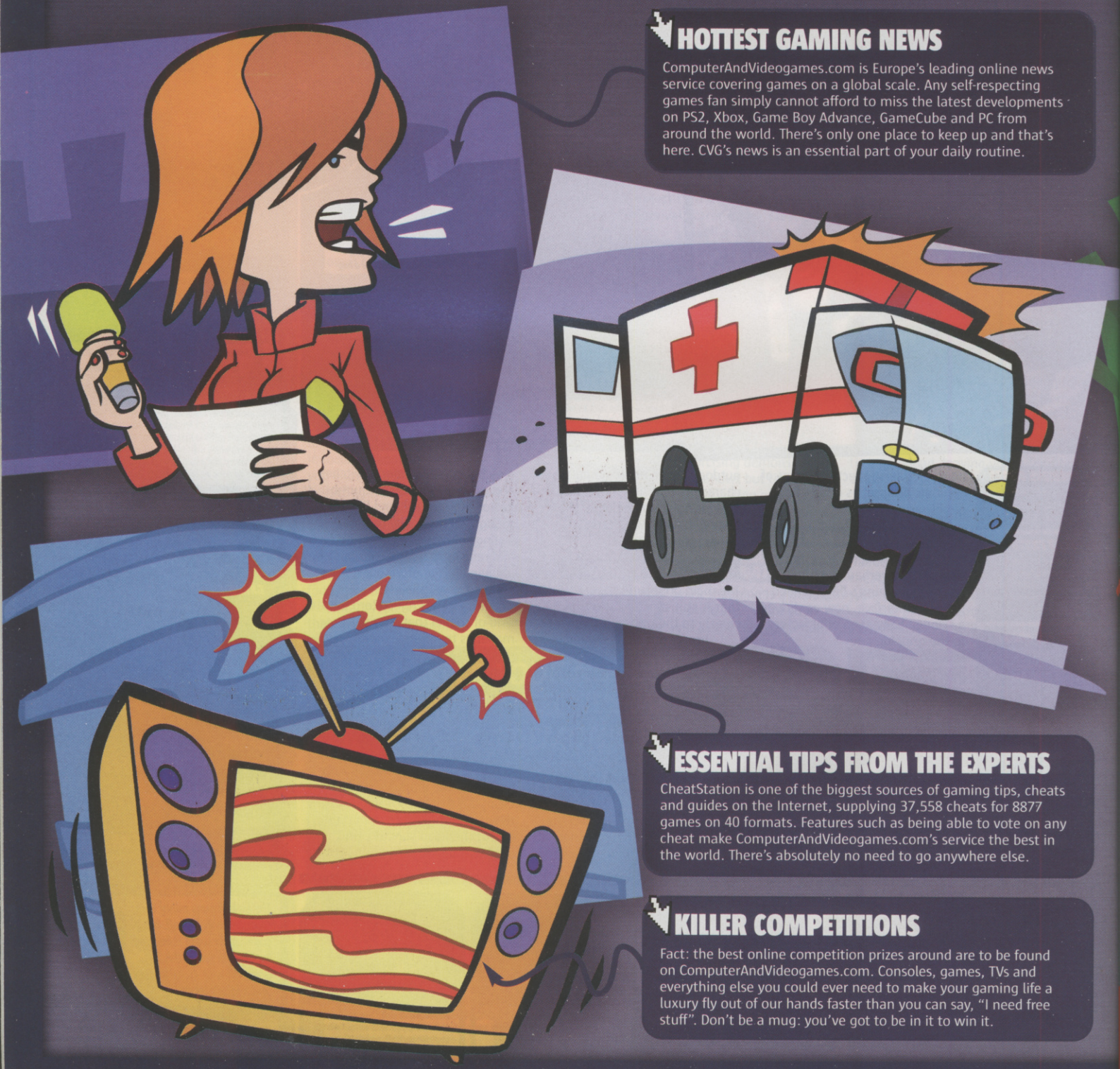
The lack of guns might turn some adventurers off, but if you're after some refreshing top-drawer terror this'll grab you with its icy fingers and it won't let go.

OVERALL SCORE 86

HOW IT COMPARES
SILENT HILL 3
PROJECT ZERO II
RESI EVIL: CODE VERONICA X

LOG ON AND LOAD UP

Still hungry for more, even after thumbing through this game-packed issue of CVG? Logging onto **ComputerAndVideogames.com** will satisfy the biggest gaming appetites



HOTTEST GAMING NEWS

ComputerAndVideogames.com is Europe's leading online news service covering games on a global scale. Any self-respecting games fan simply cannot afford to miss the latest developments on PS2, Xbox, Game Boy Advance, GameCube and PC from around the world. There's only one place to keep up and that's here. CVG's news is an essential part of your daily routine.

ESSENTIAL TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

CheatStation is one of the biggest sources of gaming tips, cheats and guides on the Internet, supplying 37,558 cheats for 8877 games on 40 formats. Features such as being able to vote on any cheat make ComputerAndVideogames.com's service the best in the world. There's absolutely no need to go anywhere else.

KILLER COMPETITIONS

Fact: the best online competition prizes around are to be found on ComputerAndVideogames.com. Consoles, games, TVs and everything else you could ever need to make your gaming life a luxury fly out of our hands faster than you can say, "I need free stuff". Don't be a mug: you've got to be in it to win it.

ON INFO!

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

There's no better place on the Web to meet like-minded people than on our forums. Feel the need to spout on about your passion? We have bulletin boards for PS2, Xbox, GameCube, Game Boy Advance, PC, Mac, PSone, Dreamcast, N64, music and film, cheats, our online ranking service CSports.net and a general place to talk games. Join the party right now!

FIND THE GAME YOU WANT

Our site is fit to burst with an enormous amount of archived news, reviews, previews, features, cheats and downloads. Looking for some screenshots? We have thousands of them. And using our simple navigation, finding exactly what you want on any format couldn't be simpler: allow us to take the pain of searching out your gaming addiction!

PLAY BEFORE YOU PAY!

All the demos, exclusive movies, patches, add-ons and extras you could ever want are available on ComputerAndVideogames.com for free. Updated daily, our service brings you the very best the Web has to offer. We even supply speedier downloads for a small charge. Be sure to try here before you buy.

www.computerandvideogames.com

RELEASE DATE: NOW

GAME INFO: COST: £29.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: NINTENDO
- DEV: NINTENDO
- WWW.METROID.COM/ZEROMISSION/
- CONTACT: 08706 060247

Even with the power-up, Samus isn't as fast as Lisa Riley when someone yells "Cake!"

Some of the passageways are so well hidden, finding them often boils down to complete luck

Suit upgrades let you explore fiery areas, but a slinky bikini would be less hassle, right?

If you're low on health, let this bird cup your ball for a spot of reinvigoration

METROID: ZERO MISSION

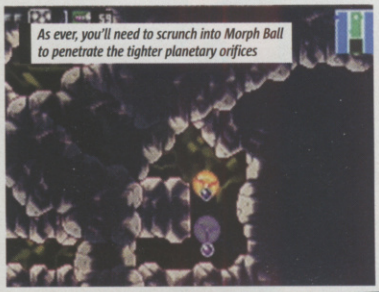
She might be a gaming granny but Nintendo's space babe still shows you a good time

Back when Lara Croft was still a dribble in her daddy's love pouch, Nintendo's buxom bounty hunter had us feverishly jerking our pads through the night in a streak of sweat-drenched alien annihilation.

Taking its cue from Samus's original Metroid adventure, Zero Mission crams the best bits into a taut reinterpretation of the game that spawned a franchise.

GOLDEN BALLS

The classic Metroid gameplay still shines as you explore the depths of planet Zebes, penetrating the maze-like subterranean world, uncovering ancient technologies to augment Samus's abilities and overcoming the obstacles ahead. Favourites such as the Morph Ball and Power Grip return and as always, the atmosphere's thicker than Rik Waller's gut blubber, thanks to some impressively moody visuals and a sublime reworking of the original Metroid musical score.

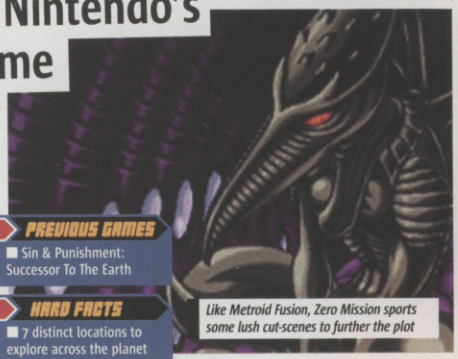


As ever, you'll need to scrunch into Morph Ball to penetrate the tighter planetary orifices

ZERO CHALLENGE

Thankfully, the difficulty level's been lowered since Samus's last GBA outing. Anyone who lobbed their pocket pal down the crapper in frustration over Metroid Fusion should fare better here – most enemies crumple after a few blasts and boss battles are a doddle once you've located their weak spots.

Unfortunately, without the ferocious challenge of Fusion, the brevity of the game becomes all too apparent. To hide this, Nintendo has rather cheaply chosen to hinder advancement by obscuring the route to your next destination as much as possible. Key areas are hidden behind rocks and walls that give nothing away, and uncovering a new path is often down to chance rather than logic.



Like Metroid Fusion, Zero Mission sports some lush cut-scenes to further the plot

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Sin & Punishment: Successor To The Earth

HARD FACTS
- 7 distinct locations to explore across the planet
- 14 possible upgrades including beefier munitions, better suits and new moves

DID YOU KNOW?
- Metroid was the creation of Nintendo's Gunpei Yokoi who was also the brains behind the original Game Boy

Even so, all but the most cack-handed of gamers should romp through Zero Mission in a couple of hours, particularly as Fusion's giveaway navigation system makes a return, showing you which direction to head in next. To Nintendo's credit, there are some juicy extras to probe, including a toughed-up version of the game and the original NES Metroid for anyone that wants to compare the two.

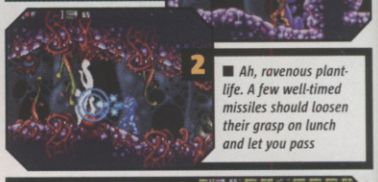
The brief playtime and lack of innovation might put you off. Still, Metroid rocks so hard, if Samus promised you a night of intergalactic canoodling, you'd be happy if all she put out was a quick grope in the shrubbery. ✷

MUTANT MENAGERIE

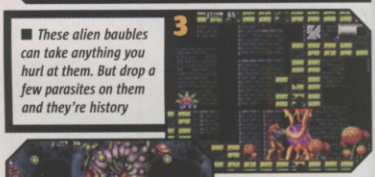
The deeper you travel into the festering caverns of Zebes, the bigger, stranger and slimier the alien inhabitants get.

They're not all there to bite huge toothy chunks out of your space armour though, and you won't be able to just blast your way through. Most of these creatures require cunning and lateral thinking to overcome them and clear the pathway ahead.

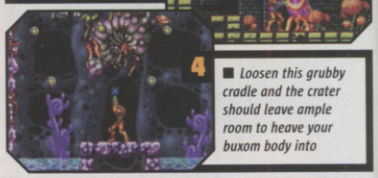
1 ■ You won't be able to dent the armour on these huge maggots, so find a way to probe that soft underbelly



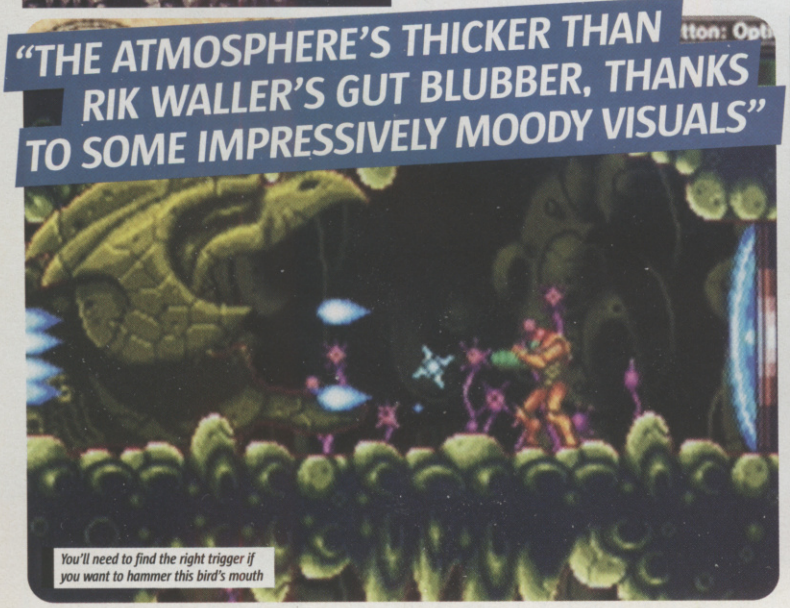
2 ■ Ah, ravenous plant-life. A few well-timed missiles should loosen their grasp on lunch and let you pass



3 ■ These alien baubles can take anything you hurl at them. But drop a few parasites on them and they're history

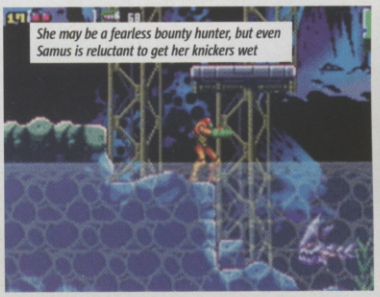


4 ■ Loosen this grubby cradle and the crater should leave ample room to heave your buxom body into

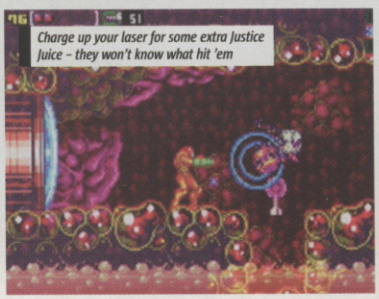


"THE ATMOSPHERE'S THICKER THAN RIK WALLER'S GUT BLUBBER, THANKS TO SOME IMPRESSIVELY MOODY VISUALS"

You'll need to find the right trigger if you want to hammer this bird's mouth



She may be a fearless bounty hunter, but even Samus is reluctant to get her knickers wet



Charge up your laser for some extra Justice Juice – they won't know what hit 'em

CVG VERDICT

MATT

GRAPHICS — 86
Dark, detailed and moody visuals bring the subterranean planet to dank life

SOUND — 88
Creepy effects and a stunning reworking of the original Metroid soundtrack

GAMEPLAY — 83
Classically compelling Metroid gameplay, but sadly lacking in any innovation

LASTING APPEAL — 72
The unlockable extras don't really compensate the brief main adventure

If you loved the original Metroid, you'll dig this – it just feels a bit like forking out a wad of cash for a quick session with a quality space whore.

OVERALL SCORE 84

HOW IT COMPARES
- METROID FUSION
- ZERO MISSION
- METROID PRIME

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

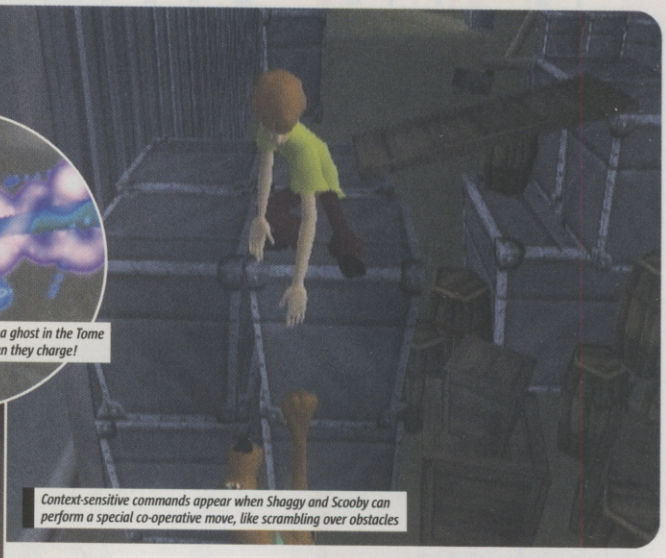
GAME INFO
COST: £29.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: THQ
- DEV: A2M
- WWW.THQ.CO.UK
- CONTACT: 01483 767 656

XBOX | PS2 | NINTENDO GAMECUBE

SCOOBY-DOO!
MYSTERY MAYHEM

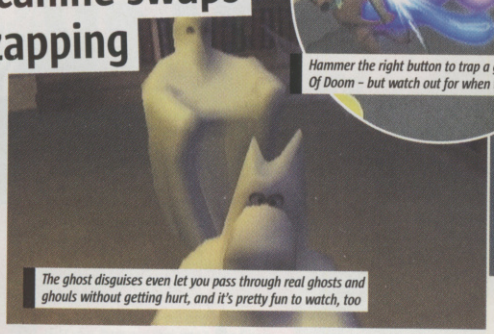
The world's favourite canine swaps snacking for ghost zapping



Context-sensitive commands appear when Shaggy and Scooby can perform a special co-operative move, like scrambling over obstacles

Hammer the right button to trap a ghost in the Tome Of Doom – but watch out for when they charge!

Don't let your Cool Meter empty or else Shaggy and Scooby will get really freaked out. Replenish it with Scooby Snacks



The ghost disguises even let you pass through real ghosts and ghouls without getting hurt, and it's pretty fun to watch, too

Levels range from the traditional haunted mansion-style area to an abandoned theme park – complete with mine cart chase

The canned laughter, velma losing her glasses, the constant search for food... Scooby-Doo! has stood the test of time, even if it is cheesier than a tramp who scrubs with Danish Blue and keeps Edam in his pants.

Mystery Mayhem upholds the cheese-count to godly gorgonzola proportions and is so faithful to the shows that levels are even split into different episodes. You chomp on Scooby Snacks to replenish your energy, the gang quip at each other as they collect clues, and there's the traditional unmasking of the baddie at the end of each adventure.

The action thankfully has a bit more depth than the cartoon. Gameplay ideas ape Banjo-Kazooie and Luigi's Mansion. You control Scooby and Shaggy co-operatively, using their individual skills to solve puzzles and zap ghosts, shadowy demons and all sorts of other comedy baddies into a magical book, Ghostbusters-style.

It's a quirky twist and makes for an okay, if lightweight, action game. It doesn't look all that spectacular and the action does get samey, but it's by far the coolest Scooby game yet. That's not saying a lot though... ✷

CVG VERDICT

Simple, honest fun that's totally true to the spirit of Scooby – funny and cheesy in equal measure, and a decent enough game in its own right.

OVERALL SCORE 68

HOW IT COMPARES
LUIGI'S MANSION
SCOOBY-DOO!
GRABBED BY THE GHOULIES

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

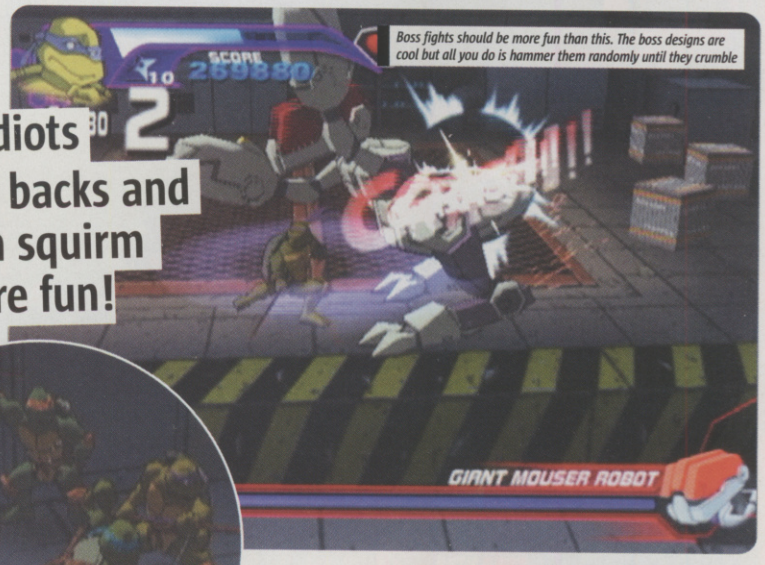
GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: KONAMI
- DEV: KONAMI
- WWW.KONAMI.COM/TMNT/OFFICIAL/FLASH/
- CONTACT: 01895 853 000

XBOX | PS2 | NINTENDO GAMECUBE | PC CD ROM

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Flip these idiots on their backs and watch 'em squirm – it's more fun!



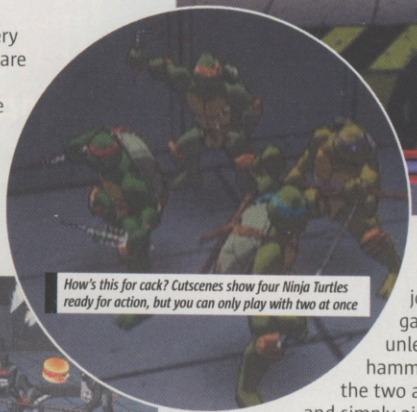
Boss fights should be more fun than this. The boss designs are cool but all you do is hammer them randomly until they crumble

GIANT MOUSER ROBOT

Turtles may well be the biggest kids' toy of the moment, but if we'd bumped uglies with Nurse CVG and produced offspring, we wouldn't let them near this game. Not because it promotes a diet that consists entirely of pizza and artificially-everythinged fizzy pop; but because it's muck.

Get this: there are four turtle heroes right? But the maximum number of players is two. The game takes its lead from ancient arcade scrolling beat 'em ups, but there's no arcade-style on-screen timer to hurry you along and consequently no tension to the action. You don't even have to worry about feeding the game more cash when you die, as you get continues galore.

Not that you'll die very often. Your ninja heroes are super-powerful, cutting through wave after wave of enemies with a painfully repetitive battle cry that will have you stuffing your ears full of beans just to make it stop.



How's this for cack? Cutscenes show four Ninja Turtles ready for action, but you can only play with two at once

Whether played alone or with a pal, the experience is sadly lacking. It could've been better with just a bit more thought

Break open boxes for temporary defence boosts and speed-ups, as well as junk food to replenish your health bar

Ultimately there's little joy to the gameplay, unless you like hammering one of the two attack buttons and simply aiming your hero at the next batch of fodder for your angry reptilian idiot. This piece of merchandise is best avoided unless you're a hopeless Ninja Turtles fan – and even then, it should be approached with a huge dollop of caution. ✷

CVG VERDICT

A great licence wasted on an idiotic, pointlessly retro game that fails to stand up to recent action games – or even old ones, for that matter. Cowabunghole.

OVERALL SCORE 46

HOW IT COMPARES
VIEWTIFUL JOE
TURTLES
DEVIL MAY CRY 2

NEW BOOKS FOR 2004

£4.99

£10.99

£7.99

ALSO AVAILABLE:

£9.99

£4.99 each

VIZ BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE NOW IN ALL BOOKSHOPS
YOU CAN ALSO BUY DIRECT ON www.viz.co.uk OR
www.amazon.co.uk OR BY CALLING 01624 677 237

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
* PUB: ACTIVISION
* DEV: K2
* WWW.TENCHUWRATHOF HEAVEN.COM
* CONTACT: 01753 756100

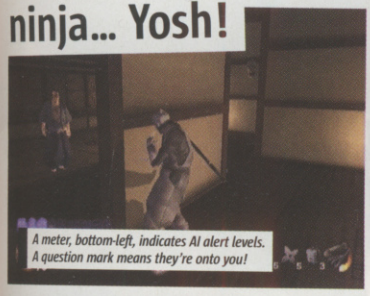
ONLINE GAMING
* 2 ON XBOX LIVE
* CO-OP AND HUNTER-HUNTED MISSIONS ACROSS SIX STAGES

XBOX

TENCHU

RETURN FROM DARKNESS

Splinter Cell goes ninja... Yosh!



A meter, bottom-left, indicates AI alert levels. A question mark means they're onto you!

Guys that are sleeping are easy targets. Stand right over them and they won't even flinch

Both Riki and Ayame can steal a defeated foe's weapon – and they've got the skills to use it

SURPRISE PARTY

Stealth Kills are achieved by slaughtering enemies without being noticed. Perform ten in succession and you're given a new combat skill!

We're crazy for stealth action right now on CVG. Still hooked on Pandora Tomorrow, we're also reliving classic Metal Gear moments in Twin Snakes for GameCube. The timing of Tenchu's debut on Xbox couldn't have been better.

Return From Darkness is a remake of last year's Wrath Of Heaven for PS2, the beautiful but frustratingly flawed game that some of us loved while others cursed. By adding online play and tightening up the AI and other gameplay issues, Activision hopes that Tenchu's lead characters Rikimaru and Ayame can at last put the old choke hold on Sam Fisher and Solid Snake.

IT'S A GUY/GIRL THING

Which levels you play and how you approach them depends on who you choose to play as.

In Gohda Castle for example, Riki must not kill anyone and sweats over staying invisible; Ayame, on the other hand, is ordered to fight through the castle fending off rival ninjas from all sides. You're more likely to earn points for stealth as Riki, but it's easier and more fun to play through as Ayame.

NICE NINJA GADGETS

After a heart-swelling intro, you're torn between playing as war-weary Rikimaru, and Ayame the girl ninja who looks deadlier than a scorpion. Rikimaru requires measured skill to succeed, and is ultimately more rewarding. Ayame is better at fighting her way out of trouble, meaning that stealth isn't always necessary. Both guys are equipped with ancient ninja accessories, which include shuriken, smoke bombs and blow darts. All of which are in limited supply, adding a layer of strategy – but not much.

In favour of the game, most gadgets are not only necessary but also best applied in some areas than others – a smoke bomb causes alarm indoors, but provides perfect cover for sneaking around the outskirts of a lake.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Tenchu: Wrath Of Heaven

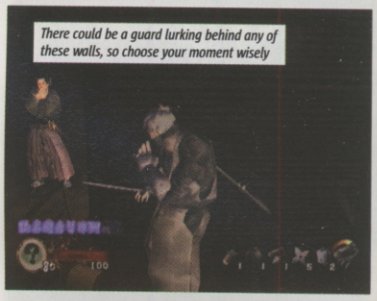
HARD FACTS
- Over 20 authentic ninja weapons
- Six new multiplayer levels online
- Two new levels for Xbox
- 11 single-player levels

DID YOU KNOW?
- Ayame is named after a Japanese flower, same as English girls are called Rose or Daisy. It grows on the mountains and is beautiful and mysterious, just like our ninja gal

IMPERFECT RETURN

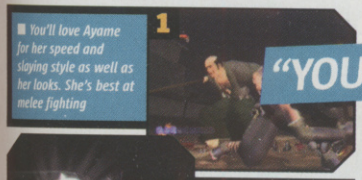
Unfortunately, this ninja dream too often becomes a nightmare of infuriating control issues, camera problems and soul-destroying restart points. Your biggest enemy is the camera, which makes it hard to peer around corners and monitor adversaries – the crux of any stealth game, basically, and it sucks. There's more. When it comes to blows, your commands are somehow slower than your enemy's, and there doesn't seem to be a logical way to attack – except that blocking seems to trigger a moment of defenceless AI. Line up a stealth kill and you're quite often able to just go running up and perform it. All of this should have been sorted out for the Xbox version but it hasn't. Shame. *

For all its gameplay flaws, Tenchu is a lovely game to watch with lots of nice detail



There could be a guard lurking behind any of these walls, so choose your moment wisely

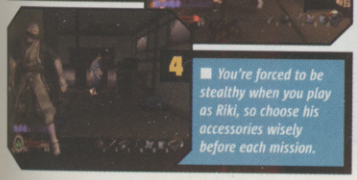
A third, not-so secret character is unlockable. You see him lurking on the character select



1 You'll love Ayame for her speed and slaying style as well as her looks. She's best at melee fighting

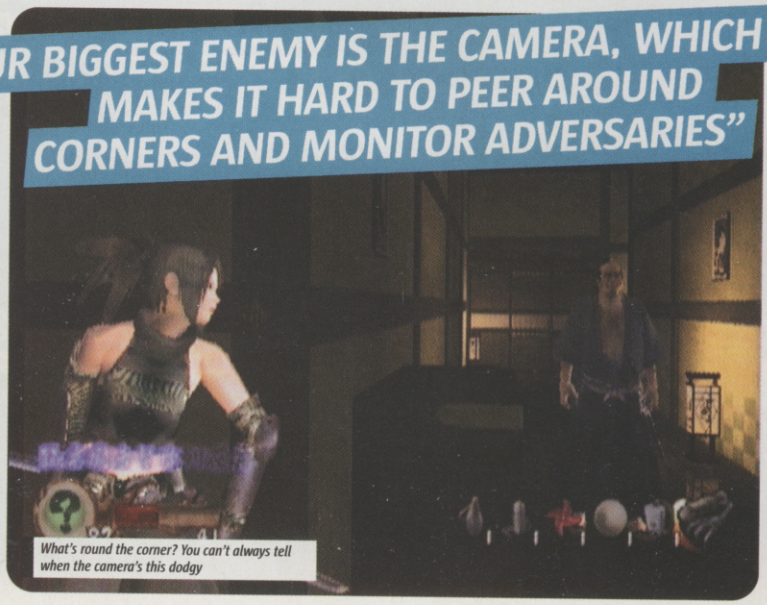
2 Ayame's Stealth Kills are wicked, especially her neck-breaking backflip move. That's slick killin'...

3 Slow-moving Riki is a bit of an oaf in battle. Even dumb drunks get the better of him



4 You're forced to be stealthy when you play as Riki, so choose his accessories wisely before each mission.

"YOUR BIGGEST ENEMY IS THE CAMERA, WHICH MAKES IT HARD TO PEER AROUND CORNERS AND MONITOR ADVERSARIES"



What's round the corner? You can't always tell when the camera's this dodgy

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 89
Atmospheric and nicely detailed rendering of ancient Japan. Character design is ace

SOUND 81
Rousing score, from the decent intro song through to all the incidental themes

GAMEPLAY 69
Great action, but the stealth element fails mainly because of faulty camera views

LASTING APPEAL 70
The characters are intriguing, and online games might stretch out longevity a bit

Oodles of potential, wonderfully presented, but the gameplay element suffers in too many crucial ways. Worth trying, but it's hard to love.

OVERALL SCORE 71

HOW IT COMPARES
SPLINTER CELL 2
TENCHU: RFD
MGS: SUBSTANCE

RELEASE DATE JUNE

GAME INFO COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: ATARI
- DEV: ATARI MELBOURNE HOUSE
- WWW.ATARI.COM/TRANSFORMERS
- CONTACT: 020 8222 9700

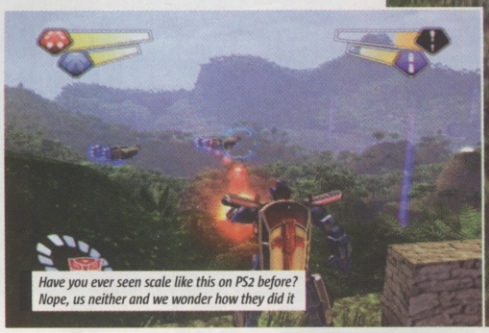
TRANSFORMERS

Look what happens when classic toys are treated with the respect they deserve

Never has your own death been so beautiful to look at. Mm-mmm

Big robots? Check. Screen-shattering explosions? Check. Enormous levels, stunning visuals and unputdownable gameplay? You bet. Transformers is surely the ultimate robot battling game, and not far off being one of the best mech shooters on PS2 either. Not bad for a game based on a bunch of cheesy Eighties toys.

Forget the story nonsense about rescuing a forgotten race of Transformers called Mini-cons that conceal tremendous powers and just lap up the visuals. Drool over the intense first- and third-person action, and fondle the pad as you explore the rolling terrain, blasting the Decepticon clones (Decepticlones!) to pieces.


Have you ever seen scale like this on PS2 before? Nope, us neither and we wonder how they did it

"LAP UP THE VISUALS, LICK AT THE INTENSE FIRST- AND THIRD-PERSON ACTION"

HULKING HEROES

Transformers is cool for so many reasons. For instance, each of the game's giant worlds is punctuated by warp portals where you can zap back to Autobot HQ. This means you can change your chosen hero mid-mission to exploit their different strengths like speed or defence. You can even muck about with the configuration of your collected Mini-cons to help you through tricky sections or access secret areas on the map (see Mini-Concoction, left).

These are clever additions to the already stellar blasting action, and certainly help make Transformers stand a clear robotic head and shoulders unit above much of its PlayStation 2 competition.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Le Mans 24 Hours, Loony Toons Space Race, Men In Black 2: Alien Escape

HARD FACTS
- 3 playable Autobots
- 4 enemy Decepticons
- 8 enormous levels to bust through

DID YOU KNOW?
- The wildly ambitious Transformers series actually begins before the Big Bang, with Primus and Unicron battling it out, and goes right the way through to space year 2314. Crikey.

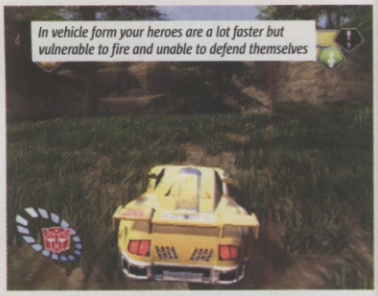
ALMOST AUTOBOT

There are however some silly, niggly problems that prevent it from becoming a true classic. There are too many tricky platforming sections, where you have to negotiate your hulking great robot across wee pinpricks of land, or along tiny mountain ledges. The levels are colossal and it's very easy to get lost and wander in circles as you sniff out secrets, which spoils the pace. It's also very tough. Get booted just once by the mighty hoof of Cyclonus, the first boss you meet, and it's Sayonara baby. Ouch. It's definitely missing a co-operative or multiplayer mode, too.

But it's easy to suffer these flaws because the rest of Transformers is so damned good. It looks beautiful, as well as being huge, challenging and inventive. It's the perfect example of how to make a great game based on a beloved years-old franchise. And most importantly, it's essential for any action junkie. ✷

The Look Out Mini-con is essentially a super-powerful sniper rifle that tears enemies apart

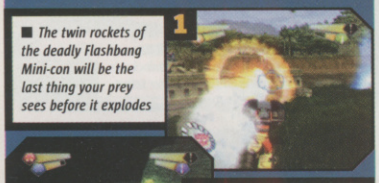
Torch the enemies and leave charred holes where there bulky bodies used to be. It's wicked-cool!

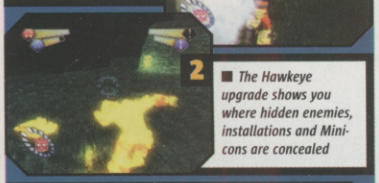

In vehicle form your heroes are a lot faster but vulnerable to fire and unable to defend themselves

MINI-CONCOCTION

Collecting the Mini-cons isn't only part of the story, they also kit you out with ace new abilities which you'll need to tackle different sections of the game.

Each Mini-con skill is assigned a shoulder button. The cool thing is, by combining Mini-cons from the same team, you can earn Energon boosts and special abilities.


1 ■ The twin rockets of the deadly Flashbang Mini-con will be the last thing your prey sees before it explodes


2 ■ The Hawkeye upgrade shows you where hidden enemies, installations and Mini-cons are concealed

3 ■ You'll love the Deflector Mini-con like your own little baby. More defence means you stay alive longer

4 Find the Glider Mini-con and access to all those hidden secrets is instantly granted. It's awesome to see too

Red Alert is CVG's least favourite Autobot, but he has a cool robotic voice: "Mmready for actzion!"

You'll marvel at the particle effects time and again as explosions rattle your screen

LEE

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 93
Incredibly detailed, with vast landscapes and stunning presentation

SOUND 93
Chunky sound effects and ace music, plus superb voice acting

GAMEPLAY 88
Occasionally frustrating, but mostly edge-of-the-seat stuff

LASTING APPEAL 86
It's a bloody enormous game, but no multiplayer limits the fun a bit

Pretty amazing stuff. A fast, frantic, incredibly action-packed mech-masher that's a total thrill ride whether you care about Transformers or not. Awesome.

OVERALL SCORE 88

HOW IT COMPARES
- ZOE: THE 2ND RUNNER
- TRANSFORMERS
- HALO

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTACT INFO
* PUB: ACCLAIM
* DEV: SWORDFISH STUDIOS
* WWW.WORLDCHAMPIONSHIPRUGBY.COM
* CONTACT: 020 7344 5000

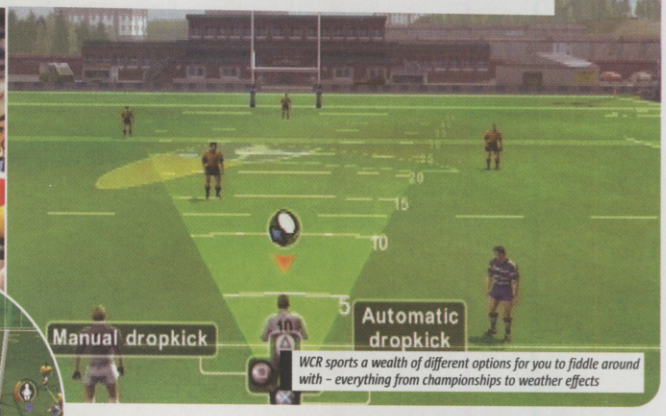
PS2 | XBOX | PC CD ROM

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY

A 30-man pile-on of fun or a bunch of knobbly old balls?

Multi-man pile-ups might look messy, but ball retrieval doesn't demand much more than some frantic button-mashing

The stadiums are nicely realised, but the character models look a bit twatty



WCR sports a wealth of different options for you to fiddle around with – everything from championships to weather effects

You'll spend much of the game with your head wedged up another man's arse – it doesn't take much skill to win a scrum

This handy pulsing triangle shows you just how far you're about to welly the ball

Of football's the cool kid at school, then rugby's his geeky brother who might be a laugh and have a complete set of Pokémon, but you wouldn't be seen dead with him in public.

Still, that hasn't stopped a couple of publishers trying to shoehorn the sport into the gaming limelight. First there was EA with its well-received Rugby series and now Acclaim's stepped onto the pitch to bring the world of macho man-hugging to a console near you.

Like other entries in the genre, World Championship Rugby prefers to keep the action arcade-orientated rather than attempting a full-on simulation of the sport. While this keeps the pace as close to blazing as you'll get in a rugby game, significant aspects of the sport, like shunting about in scrums, are reduced to skill-less button-mashing, severely damaging the sense of achievement you get from a victory.

Although WCR wields a rugby player's girth of tournament and championship options, wrapped slickly in some nicely realised on-pitch action, the game still lacks the attention to detail and wealth of licensed teams bursting from EA's offering – and that's the fundamental problem with it. It doesn't attempt to do things differently from what we've seen before – or enough to conquer current contenders. *

CVG VERDICT

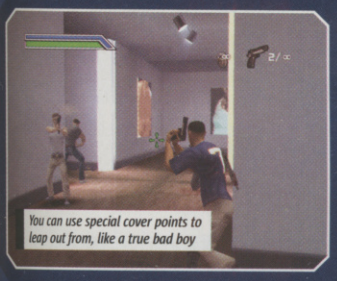
For our money, rugby games still have a long way to go before they reach the sheer adrenaline-pumping slickness of football's Pro Evo series.

OVERALL SCORE
68

HOW IT COMPARES
RUGBY 2004
WC RUGBY
NFL STREET

REVIEWS ROUND-UP

WE COULDN'T RAM ALL OUR REVIEWS IN THE REST OF THE MAG, SO COME ON FATTY, TREAT YOURSELF AN EXTRA HELPING. BURP...



You can use special cover points to leap out from, like a true bad boy

BAD BOYS II

* OUT: NOW * COST: £39.99 * PLAYERS: 1 * PS2, XBOX

Foul-mouthed and ultra violent, this is everything a Bad Boys game should be.

With loads of gunplay, crisp visuals and varied mission objectives it's certainly a fun blaster. There's not much depth to it but the gore and pace keep you engaged. Good, dirty fun.

72

It's pretty for sure, but someone forgot to put good fighting mechanics in

DRAGON BALL Z: TAIKETSU

* OUT: NOW * COST: £29.99 * PLAYERS: 1-2 * GBA

This looks like a treat but plays like a dying dog – it's ruff, ruff.

The huge characters battle it out one-on-one, but the moves are limited and there's hardly any variation between the fighters' abilities. Get GBA Mortal Kombat instead.

34

This, or the new Bond game. Hmm, what a very difficult choice...

SPACE INVADERS ANNIVERSARY

* OUT: NOW * COST: £19.99 * PLAYERS: 1-2 * PS2

Without Invaders there'd be no Final Fantasy, no Quake, no Pro Evo.

But that's no reason to want to play it now. All the variations on the theme here can't save this from being pointless. Download it off the web or play it on your phone instead.

15

It's good, cheap and funky. But it's still just pool at the end of the day

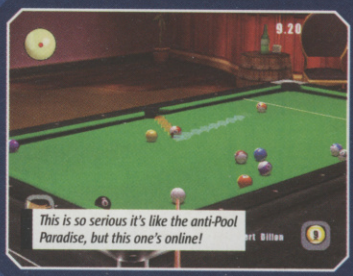
POOL PARADISE

* OUT: NOW * COST: £9.99 * PLAYERS: 1-2 * PS2,

All the pool you could ever want set on a 'funnee' tropical island.

The pool mechanics are sound and there are loads of fun games to play too, like crazily shaped tables. Ideal if you don't take the sport too seriously, but otherwise... no.

73



This is so serious it's like the anti-Pool Paradise, but this one's online!

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POOL 2004

* OUT: NOW * COST: £29.99 * PLAYERS: 1-2 * PS2, XB, PC

The serious alternative to Pool Paradise, and no less playable.

There's no bonkers stuff, but it features licensed players, tournaments and halls. There's even snooker in there too. Of no use if you have no interest in the sport, but a great sim otherwise.

76

These card-based games make some of us want to kill ourselves

YU-GI-OH! WC TOURNAMENT 2004

* OUT: NOW * COST: £29.99 * PLAYERS: 1-2 * GBA

Perfect for the greedy Yu-Gi-Oh! player, this features another 100 cards to add to your existing deck, revised rules and conditions and loads of new characters to battle.

It's still the same old card nonsense underneath of course, so you'll either love it or hate it.

70

IMPORT REVIEWS

FULLY INDEPENDENT & MULTIFORMAT ✶ TRUST NO-ONE ELSE

WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WAIT

Back with the hottest section of the magazine! Tell the truth, I'm competing with Mike, Lee and Graeme to provide you with the coolest section in CVG, so I appreciate your support, dudes. Really. Cheers.

I've seriously been wishing someone would hurry up and invent a cloning machine so I can play loads of games all at the same time. Started with Onimusha 3 this month, which demands 100% focus – it's SO amazing (even if the gameplay hasn't changed a whole lot). Then, Ninja Gaiden arrives on my desk. Tell you what, this game will make you OD on adrenaline it's so sick! To be honest, I was avoiding the other stuff because I was having too much fun, but Lifeline and Drakengard are surprisingly cool too.

Not enough hours in the day, my friends, not enough hours in the day. All the games reviewed here are available from import specialists NOW. Shop around for the best prices – don't get ripped off! And remember, daylight is for the weak!

Paul Davies

Paul Davies *The Import King*

XBOX

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO	ONLINE GAMING
OUT NOW	IMPORT COST: £55 PLAYERS: 1	✶ PUB: MICROSOFT ✶ DEV: TECMO (TEAM NINJA) ✶ WWW.NINJAGAIDENGAME.COM	✶ TOURNAMENT LEVELS TO DOWNLOAD, INT. CHAMPIONSHIP TBC

NINJA GAIDEN

Don't let this awesome ninja combat game slip by you. Geddit? Oh...

There's a tiny blue flash and your head's on the ground looking up at your own body, sliced in two. Being an evil goon in Ninja Gaiden's the worst job ever. Hero Ryu Hayabusa cuts through henchmen like eggy farts through a crowded room.

Ninja Gaiden's one of the most hotly anticipated games for some time. And seeing the American import code in action, it's not difficult to see why. It looks AMAZING. Lightning-fast visuals, crisp as a Walker's Ready Salted, with gameplay to match.

DRAGON BASHING

Ryu's a member of the Dragon Ninja clan, guardians of the legendary and evil Dark Dragon Blade. Rubbish guardians – the first time he wanders off for 5 minutes to fight a nunchaku-nut, the whole village is killed and the sword swiped.

What follows, as Ryu tracks down the missing blade and gets revenge, is a graphics-rich, combat-heavy action-adventure. Like Gaiden's closest comparison, Shinobi, the stealth part of ninjutsu has been ditched in favour of Samurai-sword-swinging, running along walls, teleporting behind people to give 'em a pasting and generally acting cool.

PREVIOUS GAMES

- Project Zero 2: Crimson Butterfly, Rygar: The Legendary Adventure, Dead Or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball, Dead Or Alive 3

HARD FACTS

- 16 sword-slashing chapters
- 20 hours of play
- Hack everything – even bat's are worth 20 Essence
- Three difficulty levels
- Online mode only available after you finish single-player

DID YOU KNOW?

- Ninpo, Ninja Gaiden's word for magic, is actually another term for the ninja art of Ninjutsu. Bet you didn't see that coming. Ha!

FIGHT RIGHT

There's also some item-related puzzled-solving, but Ninja Gaiden lives or dies on its button-mashing intense combat. These fights are the centrepieces, making up most of the gameplay, and occasionally annoying camerawork aside, are beautiful things to behold.

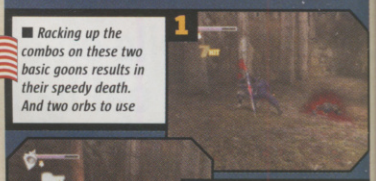
Not only do they look fantastic, but they also deliver satisfyingly meaty gameplay. Combatants are tough, get tougher fast and require you to master the entire range of Ryu's moves and weapons, as you gain them.

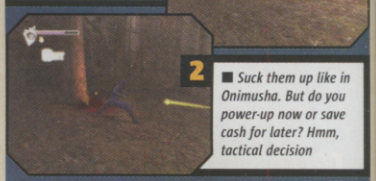
The combos, counter-attacks and guarding system are complex, but controllable enough, that with weapon-choices including bows and shuriken thrown in, there's strategy to balance the button-mashing. There's also lots to play through – expect around 20 hours before you even hit the online Master Ninja mode. A winning mix of quantity, quality and, of course, gallons of blood from the nunchaku-beatings and decapitations. ✶

CHECK OUT THOSE ORBS!

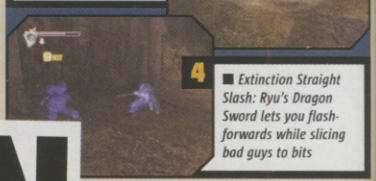
Orbs are as important to Ryu in Ninja Gaiden as Jordans are to her in... well, everything.

Killing enemies yields essence orbs. Yellow buys stuff, Blue heals and Red replenishes Ki spell power. Or use them to power-up combat moves.


1 ■ Racking up the combos on these two basic goons results in their speedy death. And two orbs to use


2 ■ Suck them up like in Onimusha. But do you power-up now or save cash for later? Hmm, tactical decision

3 ■ Ultimate Technique time. Different weapons get different moves but all deal the damage, big style


4 ■ Extinction Straight Slash: Ryu's Dragon Sword lets you flash-forwards while slicing bad guys to bits

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 95
Suck hard on the graphical goodness here, it will nourish you well

SOUND — 80
The weakest link for Gaiden, with voice-acting that's occasionally ropey

GAMEPLAY — 93
Tough, long and a whole lot of fun. The camera's the only guibble

LASTING APPEAL — 89
Not particularly worth the replay, but the online contest promises to be mint

Killer combat, visuals flasher than a John Woo movie and a learning curve that keeps testing you. What's not to like? The camera, if you're picky.

✶ OVERALL SCORE **91**

HOW IT COMPARES: SHINOBI, NINJA GAIDEN, NIGHTSHADE

✶ GAMES SUPPLIED BY THE VIDEOGAME CENTRE TEL: 01202 527 314 URL: WWW.VIDEOGAMECENTRE.CO.UK

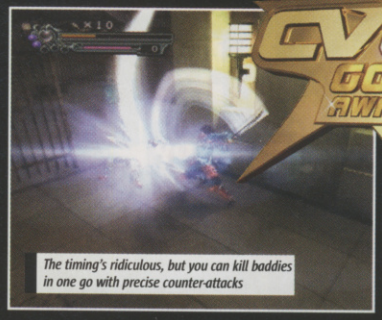
PS2

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

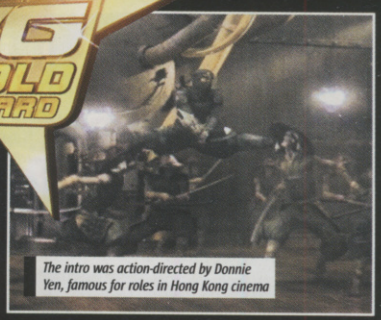
GAME INFO
IMPORT COST: £55
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: CAPCOM
- DEV: CAPCOM
- WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP/ONIMUSHA

Boss battles are ingenious with multi-articulated fiends sporting old-skool weak spots

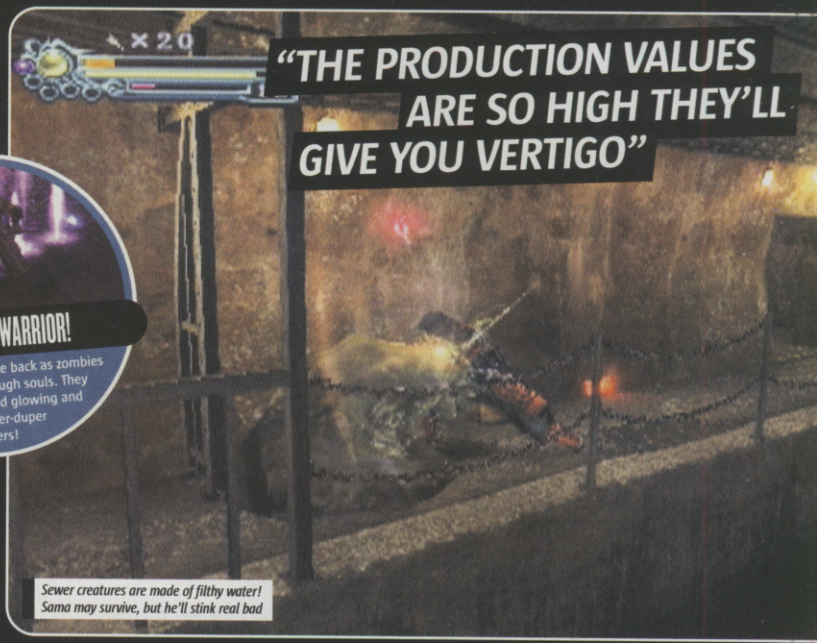


The timing's ridiculous, but you can kill baddies in one go with precise counter-attacks



The intro was action-directed by Donnie Yen, famous for roles in Hong Kong cinema

CVG GOLD AWARD



"THE PRODUCTION VALUES ARE SO HIGH THEY'LL GIVE YOU VERTIGO"

Sewer creatures are made of filthy water! Sama may survive, but he'll stink real bad

ONIMUSHA 3

And you thought you'd seen the best of PS2

GHOST WARRIOR!
Both heroes can come back as zombies if they collect enough souls. They look all white and glowing and boast super-duper powers!

With its distinct blend of survival horror and samurai style hack 'n' slash, Onimusha has grown from a Res Evil sibling into a towering gaming giant in its own right.

Oni has a rep for grandeur over gore, and stages melee battles instead of claustrophobic one-on-ones. The very best of Onimusha is distilled for part three, and is often so good that it feels like one long grand finale.

From the moment the intro kicks in, your eyes are blessed by some of the greatest scenes to honour PS2. Production values are so high they'll give you vertigo. It kicks off 500 years ago within the grounds of Anshi Castle. Soldiers are failing in their attempt to banish Oda Nobunaga's demon army. Hero Samanosuke enters the fray and from here on in the drama never lets up.

Each monster has its own attack pattern, essential to learn to avoid being clobbered!

TIME TO DIE

A location shift to modern-day Paris introduces Jacques, modelled after French actor Jean Reno (Godzilla, Ronin). Jacques looks kick-ass in a jacket festooned with ammo, and Reno's dry persona is the perfect fit.

Civilians on the Champs Elysee are being butchered, and Jacques is left to do the tidying up, with bullets instead of blades. Samonosuke and Jacques are introduced when the ancient warrior is spat through a portal. After a brief and very surprised exchange, Jacques gets yanked 500 years back in time to Japan, while Sama must deal with no-longer-very-gay Paris.

NEW WHIPPING BOY

Once in Japan, Jacques is amazed to acquire a demon gauntlet, similar to Samanosuke's, which trails an ethereal whip. Any hope you may have had for a heavy-duty, gun-toting warrior vanishes right there. However, this whip enables Jacques to pull off some righteously slick moves, like tearing boulders from the floor and dumping them on bad guys – plus it allows him to swing Tarzan style!

Both Sama and Jacques can upgrade their weapons in due course, (they're enhanced by a range of magical attributes) and sometimes they even fight together in the same scene, adding zest to the spectacle.

Although you've got a fair amount of puzzle-solving to handle, Onimusha 3 deals mainly in mesmerzing combat presented with the finest graphics, sound effects and musical score PS2 can handle. We're loving it! ✷

HARD FACTS

- Two contrasting characters, Samonosuke and Jacques
- Two contrasting worlds: feudal Japan and modern-day Paris
- One-hit super moves enable death with a single blow!
- 5,000,000 copies of Onimusha games have been sold worldwide

DID YOU KNOW?

- A special sword controller for Onimusha 3 is available in Japan for around £80!

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 97
Stunning scenes and special effects plus all characters are unique and animate superbly

SOUND — 92
Music is of the highest orchestral quality. Wicked, WICKED, sound effects during battles

GAMEPLAY — 88
Doesn't try too hard to rewrite the rules, but sticks to what we respect about Oni

LASTING APPEAL — 80
You'll treasure it after finishing it once, and you'll probably try for perfect completion

It's the best-looking PS2 game around. You'll so love the sterling action and curious plot twists. Onimusha 3 is a true Capcom masterpiece.

OVERALL SCORE 93

HOW IT COMPARES
- ONIMUSHA 2: SAMURAI'S DES
- ONIMUSHA 3: DEMON SIEGE
- ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS

LANGUAGE BARRIER: There are some text-related puzzles, so you'll need help with those. Also the story is cool and you'll miss the detail. Otherwise it's just battling!

FAIRY OF THE MONTH

Time travel is one thing, but the strangest addition to the mix is Kalass the fairy.

She joins th proceedings soon after Jacques and Samanosuke switch eras, and is on hand to transport items both locally and across time and space! Some boxes can only be opened by Kalass, plus she retrieves items dropped by enemies. Convenient, and dead cute!

■ Kalass lets you know if she spies something, but will only fetch items on command

■ Only Kalass can open this box type, so don't waste time trying when she's not there!

■ While fighting in the sewers the enemies drop items in the water, but Kalass collects them

✷GAMES SUPPLIED BY THE VIDEOGAME CENTRE TEL: 01202 527 314 URL: WWW.VIDEOGAMECENTRE.CO.UK

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: IMPORT COST: £55 PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTACT INFO: PUB: KONAMI DEV: KONAMI WWW.KONAMI.COM/FIREFIGHTER

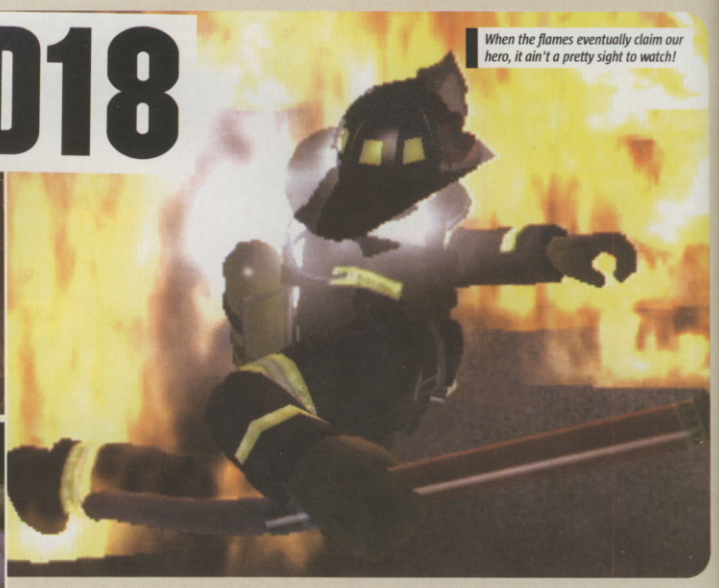
FIREFIGHTER FD18

A realistic fire-fighting game that doesn't quite fulfill some boyhood dreams

There's no way through here until you deal with the blaze, so keep your distance!

After each mission your rating takes into account injuries as well as survivors

This is the scabby bad guy, dudes. All covered in burns and out for revenge


When the flames eventually claim our hero, it ain't a pretty sight to watch!

If you're thinking of heroes you can identify with in situations that can be truly terrifying, firefighters fit the bill. In this actioner you have very simple controls and objectives: switch between nozzle types and your axe for chopping through obstacles and rescue people trapped by blazes.

The run of play is as claustrophobic as possible, with dramatic moments such as exploding cars and collapsing ceilings to bounce your stress levels up. Fire is your enemy, which makes for a novel take on the action.

THE HEAT IS ON

In fact, FD18 borrows this idea from Sega's Brave Firefighters coin-op (1999), which also trained you to recognise specific types of blaze and treat them accordingly. Brave Firefighters was only point and shoot, however – House Of The Dead with hoses. What's extra clever about FD18 is that you must make routes through the flames to reach objectives, kicking down doors and crouch/walking to see under heavy layers of smoke. You certainly feel the heat, and the pressure to act decisively in order to save lives.

As with all pure action games, FD18 has its annoyances and limitations. It plays like an arcade game, with unfair surprises taking you down at least once, forcing you to play each area to perfection. Overall, although we like the premise loads, you'd be better off waiting to rent this one. ✷

PAUL

CVG VERDICT

An overall enjoyable interpretation of a thrilling theme, but fails to be more imaginative than walking around putting out large fires. Worth a try though.

OVERALL SCORE 68

HOW IT COMPARES: CITY CRISIS (PS2) FIREFIGHTER FD18 BURNING RANGERS (SATURN)

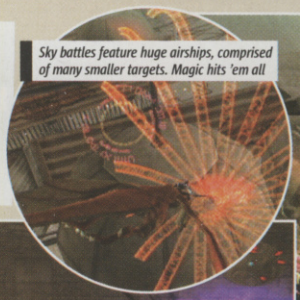
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

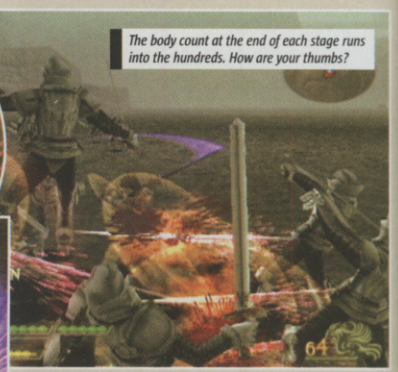
GAME INFO: IMPORT COST: £55 PLAYERS: 1

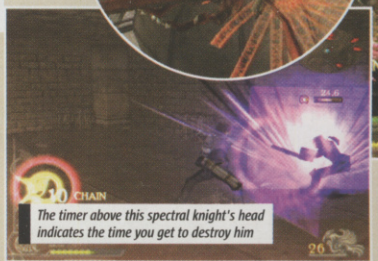
CONTACT INFO: PUB: SQUARE-ENIX DEV: CAVIA WWW.SQUARE-ENIX-USA.COM/GAMES/DRAKENGARD

DRAKENGARD

Is PS2's long wait for a sublime Panzer Dragoon type experience finally over?


Sky battles feature huge airships, comprised of many smaller targets. Magic hits 'em all


The body count at the end of each stage runs into the hundreds. How are your thumbs?


The timer above this spectral knight's head indicates the time you get to destroy him

Your magic attacks take the form of an almighty dose of dragon breath in flight mode

Apart from Omega Boost, an excellent sci-fi shooter released in 1999, Panzer's elegant brand of blasting has been reserved for rival consoles. You might also remember the Panzer Dragoon RPG, released for Sega's Saturn – a fans' fave that embellished the Panzer world on foot, but replaced real-time aerial battles with turn-based scraps.

Drakengard is almost a sort of next-gen Panzer RPG. The main character, Caim, has made a pact with a glorious red dragon and together they dogfight against evil Empire forces. It even has an Orta style lock-on system and magic attacks. The rest of the time Caim is on on foot with sword.

FIGHT RIGHT

The emphasis is always survival against massive odds, resulting in barely controlled chaos enriched with heavy-duty special effects. We like that often you can switch between the two modes just by hitting Select, and the hefty RPG experience system where Caim's dragon evolves and Caim's weapons get more effective.

But, while overall you have a typically slick Square-Enix production, fighting is too simplistic, with only one button to perform most attacks. Also, despite the enemies themselves looking terrific throughout, the backdrops for the aerial battles are no match for Panzer Dragoon Orta. ✷

PAUL

CVG VERDICT

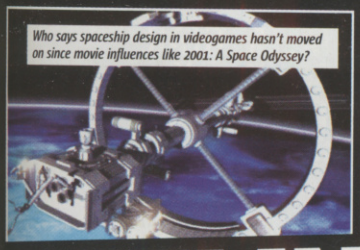
The flying sections almost compete with Panzer Dragoon, but the battlefield is an exercise in button-mashing. Still, an evolving and rewarding quest.

OVERALL SCORE 81

HOW IT COMPARES: PANZER DRAGOON ORTA DRAKENGARD OMEGA BOOST

✷ GAMES SUPPLIED BY THE VIDEOGAME CENTRE TEL: 01202 527 314 URL: WWW.VIDEOGAMECENTRE.CO.UK

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
OUT NOW	IMPORT COST: £55 PLAYERS: 1	* PUB: KONAMI * DEV: KONAMI * WWW.KONAMI.COM/LIFELINE/



Who says spaceship design in videogames hasn't moved on since movie influences like 2001: A Space Odyssey?

Once you figure out the weak spots the aliens die easily. Well, easy-ish that is

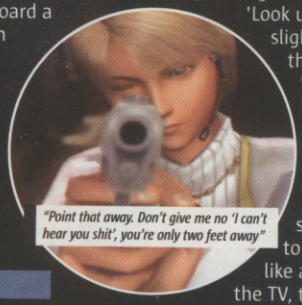
LIFELINE

Retro knuckle-buster that deserves a bit of a kicking

After a hard day's work fighting the alien menace, Rio winds down with a curry, ten lagers and then voms the lot

Usually while playing survival horror, we're shouting stuff that isn't fit to print. Measured words just aren't on the list. Yet, these are exactly what are required for Konami's new game in which your heroine takes her cues from your voice!

Yep, it seems ridiculous but actually works out pretty well. You're given charge of a female undercover agent called Rio, who was onboard a space-station hotel when disaster strikes. In the aftermath of an alien attack, you find yourself trapped in the control room, and Rio is your only contact via headset. From here on in, Rio depends on your every spoken command.



"Point that away. Don't give me no 'I can't hear you shit', you're only two feet away"

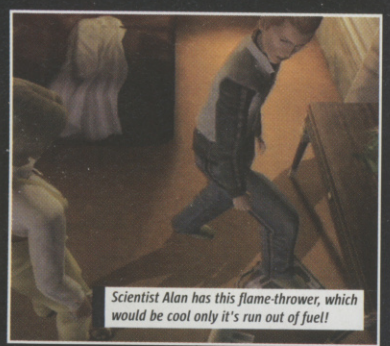
SAY AGAIN?

Of course, we tried 'Take a shower' and 'I love you' and got reactions too: 'Not in your lifetime' and 'Be serious'. But we had more fun doing things properly. Rio reacts surprisingly well, whether exploring or fighting. You need a very logical, almost robotic way of constructing phrases, but the range is huge and the consequences are fun as well as involving – once you get the hang of it.

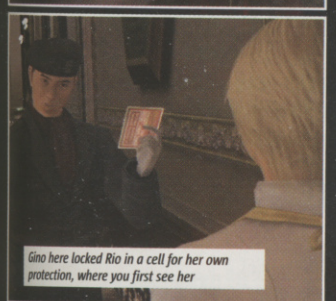
Simple tasks require painfully exact phrasing: 'Search beneath dresser', not 'Look under dresser'. In battle it's slightly better, as you shout the name of the target plus 'Shoot', 'Dodge', 'Low kick', 'Taunt' and so on.

We couldn't help being drawn in by the plot, and enjoyed finding enemy weak-spots and shouting them out for Rio to shoot. And while you feel like a dork shouting stuff at the TV, the action is so engrossing that you stop caring. Lifeline isn't perfect, and it's sometimes frustrating, but it's still definitely one to check out. *

Rio desperately needs to get the code to this safe where she's stashed her Red Bull



Scientist Alan has this flame-thrower, which would be cool only it's run out of fuel!



Gino here locked Rio in a cell for her own protection, where you first see her

CVG VERDICT

Gets away with being one of the most innovative games on PS2, with the expected level of frustration outweighed by enjoyment of the adventure.

OVERALL SCORE **77**

HOW IT COMPARES
ONIMUSHA 3
LIFELINE
RESIDENT EVIL: CV

OVERSEAS CONSOLE RELEASE SCHEDULE

JAPANESE RELEASE DATES

PLAYSTATION 2

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
15/4	Backyard Wrestling	Eidos
	Kaena	Namco
	Happiness Operator	Sony
22/4	Ultimate Muscle: The Kinnikuman Legacy	Bandai
	Simple 2000 Series Vol. 49 World Champ Dodge Baller	D3
	WRC2: Extreme (Spike the Best)	Spike
	Derby Stallion IV	Enterbrain
	Generation of Chaos IV	Idea Factory
	Panzer Front Ausf.B	Enterbrain
28/4	Xenosaga Freaks	Namco

GAMECUBE

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
TBC	Donkey Konga Disc 2	Nintendo

XBOX

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
4/22	DroneZ	Metro 3D
4/24	Puyo Puyo Fever	Sega
4/29	Guilty Gear XX Reload	Sammy
	Grabbed by the Ghoulies	Microsoft
May	SNK Vs Capcom SVC Chaos	SNK Playmore
	Metal Slug 3	SNK Playmore

GAME BOY ADVANCE

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
3/25	Bobobobo Bobobobo: Ultra Solider Nine	Hudson
	Kirby Star: Great Labyrinth of the Mirror	Nintendo
3/26	Puku Puku's Love Cupid	Marvelous
	Dragon Ball Z: Muku Tougeki	Banpresto
4/01	Digimon Racing	Bandai
	Tokyo Devil	Taito
4/15	Fullmetal Alchemist	Bandai
Apr	Monster Summoner	Artin
	Beet the Vandal Buster: The Buster's Sword	Bandai

AMERICAN RELEASE DATES

PLAYSTATION 2

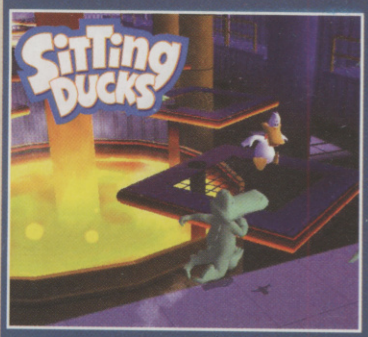
DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
3/4	Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Sony
5/4	Ten Pin Alley 2	Jack of All Games
	Gradius V	Konami
	NBA Ballers	Midway
	Supercar GT	EA
	Red Dead Revolver	Rockstar
6/4	Alias	Acclaim
12/4	UFC: Sudden Impact	TDK Mediactive
	Serious Sam	Global Star
15/4	Micro Mayhem	Jaleco

GAMECUBE

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
5/4	WarioWare Inc: Mega Party Games	Nintendo
15/4	Micro Mayhem	Jaleco
	World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco

XBOX

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
1/4	Funkmaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory	XG Games
5/4	NBA Ballers	Midway
	Red Dead Revolver	Rockstar
	Manhunt	Rockstar
6/4	Alias	Acclaim
15/4	Micro Mayhem	Jaleco



GAME BOY ADVANCE

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
16/3	Ice Nine	BAM
	Sitting Ducks	Hip Games
23/3	Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow	Ubi Soft
30/3	CT Special Forces 2	Hip Games
1/4	Bejeweled	Majesco
15/4	River City Ransom	Atlus

LOOK OUT NEXT MONTH!

We've got some almighty beat 'em ups due in next issue, which include The King of Fighters 2002 on PS2 and Guilty Gear XX Reload for Xbox (and we're secretly curious to see how SVC Chaos shapes up on Xbox). Dead or Alive Online is much wanted too – we're blowing the dust off DoA3 as we speak!

Plus we've got our hearts set on WarioWare Inc for GameCube too, which could mean nothing else gets played after all. Anway, see you next time!

* GAMES SUPPLIED BY THE VIDEOGAME CENTRE TEL: 01202 527 314 URL: WWW.VIDEOGAMECENTRE.CO.UK

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

Big 50!

Only the best games make it into our Big 50. Don't fancy any of this month's reviews? One of these'll please you – guaranteed!

F-ZERO GX 91%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

So fast and polished it'll blind you, playing with yourself is that much fun it ought to be illegal (and probably is in those parts of America where you can marry horses). The handling feels absolutely on the money – even when you're careering along at about a million mph you still feel in control. Every nano second of reaction counts. If it was a Pot Noodle, it'd be Curry flavour.

GET INTO THE ZONE AND YOU FEEL AWESOME. THINK ZEN AND THE ART OF HAND-EYE CO-ORDINATION

007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING 83%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

EA must love pain, 'cos every year it does a Bond game and every year someone disses it for not being as good as GoldenEye. Same this year, only it really isn't that far off. No, honestly.

ADVANCE WARS 2: BLACK HOLE RISING 91%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Proof that strategy games aren't for speccy twats called DarthMaul897364. Advance Wars 2 is addictive, challenging and... uh-oh, the F word... fun!

BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Acclaim ■ £19.99 - 39.99

For people that love driving VERY FAST, this is a gift from the gods. No-frills, balls-out, unadulterated arcade racing with wicked pile-ups. Still ace a year on.

CALL OF DUTY 90%

■ PC ■ Activision ■ £39.99

The best offline shooter on PC, you switch nationalities and theatres of war to stun the Hun and win WWII. Ace, but those Russian pants chafe real bad.

CASTLEVANIA 85%

■ PS2 ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Fangtastic and faithful recreation of all that's great about the series, from the exploration and puzzle-solving to spot-on combat.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 03-04 84%

■ PC ■ Eidos ■ £29.99

With less bugs and updated player stats, say goodbye both to soap and the real world, and embrace the crack-like phenomenon that is Champ Man. Ugly as a Southgate/Rooney lovechild, mind.

CIVILIZATION III 90%

■ PC ■ Atari ■ £9.99 (Conquest add-on £19.99)

Better than history lessons taught by a page 3 girl, re-write history as it should've been – with YOU in charge. Strategy-wise, it's as deep as it gets.

DANCE STAGE MEGAMIX/UNLEASHED 76%

■ PS2, Xbox ■ Konami ■ £29.99/£39.99

Plug in a dance mat and shake your booty – or cringe as your nan wobbles her chicken-wings. Groovier than titty-poppin' Justin Timberlake, a fave when friends and family are round.

EYETOY PLAY 74%

■ PS2 ■ Sony ■ £39.99

Another PS2 party fave making you the star. So simple that even footballers' wives could play it and just as shallow – the novelty value barely lasts long enough to avoid feeling swizzed.

FINAL FANTASY X 88%

■ PS2 ■ Sony ■ £19.99

The first FF for PS2 was a Choco-fanciers wet-dream. Massive and absorbing, the purer levelling up and skills system kicks over-drives up X-2's ass.

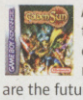
FINAL FANTASY IX 86%

■ PSone ■ Atari ■ £19.99

PSone's swan-song of all that was great about the series up to that point, but the dumbed-down levelling-up system led to beards at dawn among FF fans.

GOLDEN SUN 85%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99



An RPG that lacks nothing in terms of scale and longevity, despite being on the miniature GBA. Small things are the future! More innovative than part two.

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK 95%

■ PS2, XBOX ■ Rockstar ■ £39.99

Two classics for the price of one, GTA lets you loose in a concrete jungle where anything goes, so long as it's on the wrong side of the law. Slick!

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC 93%

■ PS2 ■ Sony ■ £19.99

Want a garage full of classic cars but can't be arsed to work for a living or even go steal them all? Dust this one off in preparation for GT4 instead.

LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER 2 78%

■ PS2, Xbox ■ Eidos ■ £19.99

Does everything a platformer does but it's dark, rich gameworld makes you feel there's much more to it – which there is, like real-time morphing environments! Best of the series by far.

MANHUNT 72%

■ PS2 ■ Rockstar ■ £39.99

The current king of controversy, it starts out all stealth and edgy violence but ends up as a case of style over substance. While it lasts, you'll be killing your hunters with sadistic glee.

HALO 95%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Rockstar ■ £39.99

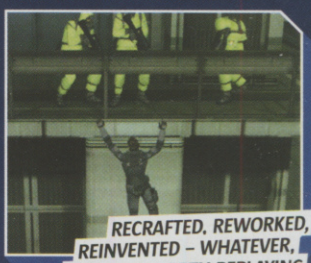
Take a movie style sci-fi plot, tons of crazy-looking enemies and mint vehicles, great controls, fekking ace set-pieces, lush graphics, superb co-op and Live options, add some seriously sweaty and intense fighting – then ram it all down the muzzle of your Xbox, stick it in your face and pull the trigger. Boom! That's how you'll feel when your quivering hands finally drop the pad. Oh, not bad on PC either.

TWO YEARS ON AND IT'S STILL THE BEST SHOOTER OUT ON CONSOLE. A MUST-PLAY FOR ALL

METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES 89%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Recrafting of a stealth masterpiece, Snake has taken out Sons Of Liberty, stolen it's clothes, stuffed the limp corpse of its plot in a foot-locker, and time-warped back to his greatest adventure from PSone, dragging it kicking and screaming into the present. Does it work? Hell yes! 'New' moves, features like first-person firing, better AI for guards and vastly improved environments make for one of Cube's finest.



RECRAFTED, REWORKED, REINVENTED – WHATEVER, IT'S WELL WORTH REPLAYING

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!! 86%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Closer to the N64 than the beloved SNES version, DD tries to be a crowd-pleaser but some players hate its kiddier karts and stretched-out tracks.

MARIO SUNSHINE 92%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £19.99

Reinvented platform action thanks to the Ron Jeremy look-alike's new backpack. More magical moments than David Blaine's shazam hands.

MAX PAYNE 2: FALL OF MAX PAYNE 84%

■ PC, PS2, Xbox, GBA ■ Rockstar ■ £29.99 - 39.99

Yet more hard-nosed, stylish shooting shenanighans with Bullet Time and amnesia as Max scores again. PC and Xbox versions are let down by slow frame rates and long loading on PS2.

METROID PRIME 93%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £19.99

Classic platformer melded with first-person shooter into a totally unique-feeling actioner that's perfectly paced, heavily atmospheric and hard!

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE 81%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Sons Of Liberty gets a remix. Now with more Snake and less of that albino fop. Makes you wonder why they didn't do it right the first time. Helped define the stealth genre, but the plot is quite nuts.

NBA STREET 2 83%

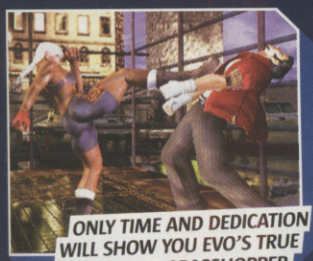
■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA Sports ■ £39.99

Basketball goes back to the street... again. Fast, funky, full of neat tricks and fantastic commentary, Street 2 really does capture the feel of the sport perfectly.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION 93%

■ PS2 ■ Sega ■ £39.99

Boasts a fighting system deeper than Stephen Hawking's Theory of Everything. Unlike the boffin's concept, though, Evo stands the test of time. We said it was in a class apart a year ago, and the subtle complexities of how the different fighters' styles and moves balance out still has us hypnotised. CVG's Mike (Shaolin Monk Lei-Fei) and Paul (Kage) have become like steel predators locked in a dance of mortal and mental combat ever since.



ONLY TIME AND DEDICATION WILL SHOW YOU EVO'S TRUE POTENTIAL, GRASSHOPPER

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC, GameCube, GBA ■ EA ■ £39.99

A blinding racer for anyone that loves attaching spinning rims and kitting their motor out with a booming sound system. Everyone, then!

POKEMON PINBALL RUBY/SAPPHIRE 86%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

The best pinball game ever, it's dead clever the way it combines collecting the furry critters with frantically slapping your Pokéball with your flippers. Ack ack!

POKEMON SAPPHIRE/RUBY 87%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Catch yet more furry creatures, train them and then go to battle against fellow Pokémaniacs. It may look pants but this is pure gaming gold, honest.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME 89%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC ■ Ubisoft ■ £39.99

Ace platformer that likes to get all Craig David with a fancy "Can I get a rewind?" time-travel feature.Looks luverly, but a bit short and buggy too.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 95%

■ PS2, PC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Best football game on the planet. What more do you want us to say? Oh yeah... no real players. Well, we've all gotta have some dreams, right?

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2 93%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Street racing thrills in sumptuous looking cities with awesome Xbox Live support too. Bit of a slow-burner till you've got some cool cars.

RAINBOW SIX 3 84%

■ PS2, Xbox ■ UbiSoft ■ £39.99

Great squad-based tactical shooter that feels more realistic than other games in this arena. You'll look a twat wearing that headset to talk to people though. PS2's outing is the weakest, too.

SILENT HILL 3 77%

■ PS2, PC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

If a tree was chopped down in Silent Hill and no-one was around, would it still make a noise? More spooky going's on in the foggy, radio-unfriendly small town. Ties up all 1 and 2's loose ends.

SIM CITY 4 79%

■ PC ■ EA ■ £34.99

Make like a mayor and build the metropolis of your dreams. Just don't come running to us for help if your water pipes burst – we know a few plumbers but they're all rubbish.

SOULCALIBUR 2 88%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA/Nintendo ■ £39.99

Looks great but weak AI makes one-player too easy and the fighting system just isn't deep enough to last in multiplayer. We prefer Virtua Fighter.

SSX 3 85%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

The ultimate boarding thrill-ride, SSX 3 is more open-ended as you wrack up the points exploring three huge mountains looking for the phattest air.

STAR WARS: KOTOR 88%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Activision ■ £39.99

Star Wars gets a AAA game, with cool weapons and skills plus a genius fighting system. More fun than waxing a wookie – but just as beardy.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 89%

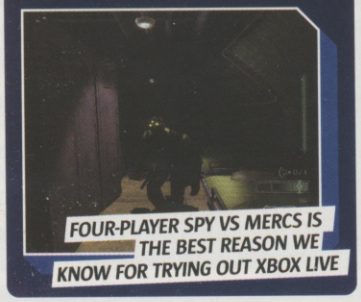
■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC ■ EA Sports ■ £39.99

Someone should have told Siegfried and Roy that there are easier ways to tame a tiger. This is the Gran Turismo of golf games – it's that good!

SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW 94%

■ Xbox, PC, GBA ■ Ubisoft ■ £39.99

Sam Fisher slaps on his night perving goggles and pokes his optic cable into loads more crevices in this stealth sequel masterpiece. Multiplayer is GENIUS.



FOUR-PLAYER SPY VS MERCS IS THE BEST REASON WE KNOW FOR TRYING OUT XBOX LIVE

TIMESPLITTERS 2 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Eidos ■ £19.99

Comedy time-travelling shooter with great levels and wicked multiplayer modes. If you loved GoldenEye on N64, snap this up.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 79%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube, GBA ■ Activision ■ £39.99

The weakest game in the series, but Tony's still the chairman of the board when it comes to skating on your console. Made us wish Jackass' Bam Margera would do his own videogame.

TOP SPIN 83%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

"Anyone that says Virtua Tennis is better cannot be serious. Wedge a racket up their ass and make them play this, that'll learn 'em real good". A direct quote from CVG's Grazza, no less.

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA 77%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Activision ■ £39.99

If you're a fan of GTA then True Crime will have you spitting bullets out your butt at the similarities. The city itself is vast, but once again it's a case of less could've been more. Mad ending too.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2004 87%

■ PC ■ Atari ■ £34.99

Online shooter that plays as good as it looks. 2K3's much-vaunted missing vehicles finally turned up while the original's best mode got reinstated.

VIEWTIFUL JOE 89%

■ GameCube ■ Capcom ■ £39.99

A kung-fu fighting superhero crimefighter with more Bullet Time tricks than the whole Matrix trilogy. Crazy, unique and very cool – viewtiful even!

WARIO WARE INC. 88%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Mini-game nirvana in one of the smartest, most devious and addictive games ever. The pleasure of slicing steaks and picking noses is intense, but over too soon.

WWE SMACKDOWN! HCTP 87%

■ PS2 ■ THQ ■ £39.99

The series gets bigger and better each year and now you can play Bra and Panties matches avec the laydeez – it's the best wrestling game ever!

LEGEND OF ZELDA: LINK TO THE PAST 92%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

A blast from Nintendo's past, but now with the added Four Swords multiplayer game. A piece of magical adventuring you've got to check out.

LEGEND OF ZELDA: LINK TO THE PAST 92%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Absorbing graphics and captivating gameplay, mini Orlando Bloom Link will pull you in faster than Jordan's yo-yo knickers go up and down.

Do you agree with CVG? If you think there's something missing, write it and let us know. mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

NEW ENTRIES

SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW
That Snake, y'see, he always was weak. Sam's the man and his masterful stealthy sequel snagged him one of CVG's highest scores in ages.

SSX 3
It was only ever temporarily knocked off it's rightful Big 50 slot by 1080, but now the sympathy vote's dead, viva the true snow king.

METAL GEAR SOLID: TWIN SNAKES
No second-class, wuss from a fourth-rate agency like Third Echelon can keep ol' stealthy outta the charts. We did the maths, and TS adds up to FUN.

DROP-OUTS

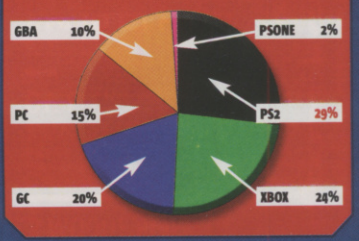
1080° AVALANCHE
Thanks to Snake, that sorry feeling we've had for Cube just went. As did our reason to play 1080.

SPLINTER CELL
So long old Sam, hello new Sam: SWAT Turns, Half-Split jumps and upside-down shooting.

THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT
It's Spring, the sap is rising and we remembered that yes, we DO have a life, involving REAL people.

FORMAT FACE-OFF

Which formats rule CVG's Big 50 chart this month? Here's the breakdown...



BEST AND WORST OF THE LAST 3MONTHS

Missed an issue of CVG and want to know what the reviews highlights and lowlights were? Here you go...

SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW	
XB, PC	94%
METAL GEAR SOLID: TWIN SNAKES	
GC	89%
RAINBOW SIX 3	
PS2	84%
FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES	
GC	68%
THIS IS FOOTBALL 2004	
PS2	36%

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2004	
PC	87%
KILL.SWITCH	
PS2/XB	82%
CASTLEVANIA	
PS2	85%
007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING	
PS2/XB/GC/GBA	83%
URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER	
PS2/XB/GC/PC	34%

GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK	
XB/PS2	95%
KYA DARK LINEAGE	
PS2	82%
CONFLICT DESERT STORM II	
GC	83%
FLIPNIC	
PS2	81%
STAR WARS GALAXIES	
PC	77%

NURSE CVG'S BIG TIPS

Nurse CVG opens her Surgery door wide – it's like the NHS but with more tips and less dead people lying around

Alright, alright, form an orderly queue. I can't cope with you all coming at once.

Welcome back to the Surgery and thanks for stuffing my inbox tight with tips of all shapes and sizes – that's just how I like it. Oh, and John Harper, from Bath. I'm not that kinda nurse – try Help For Mentalists in the Yellow Pages.

This month I've been working even closer with Team CVG to bring you the hottest tips around for the newest games. I've worked my charms on Tak, Nightshade, SOCOM II and my favourite undercover lover, big boy Bond. On top of that, I've arranged treatments for every game in the UK top 20 chart. Go ahead then, cop a feel of my tips. Just don't forget, I want more of your own hints, cheats and tactics next month. It takes a lot to satisfy me...

Lots of Love, Nurse CVG x x x

TAK AND THE POWER OF JUJU

PS2, GC

All the jungles in Tak reminded me of I'm a Celebrity. I can't stand that fake gomper Jordan. She might be famous, but her tips have nothing on mine.

PS2: Enter the codes, pause, then activate cheats in the Extras Menu.

Everything .....◀ ▶ ■ ■ ● ● ◀ ▶
All Plants .....■ ▲ ▶ ▲ ▶ ▼ ▼
100 Feathers.....■ ▲ ● ■ ▲ ● ■ ▲
All Moonstones ▲ ▲ ■ ■ ● ● ◀ ▶
Juju Power-ups..▲ ▶ ◀ ▼ ▲ ● ■ ▼
All Yorbels .....▲ ▲ ◀ ■ ▶ ● ▼ ▲

GC: Tap in these cheats while paused

100 Feathers .....B, Y, X, B, Y, X, B, Y
All cut-scenes .....C, D, B, B, X, X, C, D
All Juju Power-ups ..A, D, C, B, Y, X, B, B
All Moonstones .....Y, Y, B, B, X, X, C, D
All Plants .....B, Y, X, C, A, D, B, B
All Yorbels .....Up, Y, C, B, D, X, B, A
Cheat Menu .....B, X, Y, Y, B, X, Y, Y

NIGHTSHADE

PS2

The thing about ninjas is they do everything quietly. They go quietly and they come quietly. I can't help myself from making noise. Here's how to unlock the hidden characters.

- *Unlock Hidden Character Hisui:* Beat the game on normal mode.
- *Unlock Hidden Character Joe Musashi:* Beat 88 stages in the game.
- *Unlock Alternate Costume for Hisui:* Collect all 88 of the secret clan coins.

MX UNLEASHED

PS2, XBOX

A vibrating machine throbbing between your legs? Fantastic. Oh, yeah, and motocross is good too. All you have to do here is enter these codes on the Character Completion field in the cheats screen.

50CC Class .....SQUIRRELDOG
Pro Physics .....SWAPPIN
Unlock all bonuses .....CLAPPEDOUT

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS VIII

PS2

That's more like it. There's way too much violence in these samurai games. Sometimes romance is better than blindly stabbing away with your weapon. Create a new officer with these names to unlock their special stats:

Abraham Lincoln
Albert Einstein
Ben Franklin
Benedict Arnold
Davy Crockett
Jedidiah Smith
Jim Bridger
John Adams

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

PS2

Sometimes I like nothing better than playing dirty. To instantly go to level 20 with 999 skill points, start a new game and enter this code first.

✷ *Level 20 with 999 skill points*
L1 R2 △ R2

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS

PS2

What? There's no way I'm sucking two seals, whether they're in the US Navy or not. Oh, SOCOM. Whoops. Here's how to get all the unlockables.

✷ *Beat Lieutenant rank*
Unlocks Algerian Officer, Pius Platz, Vaaleska Lukanov as online characters and an extra movie in Art Gallery 1.

✷ *Beat Ensign rank*
Unlocks terrorist weapons and Feral as an online character.

✷ *Beat Commander rank*
Unlocks S.A.S, Russian weapons, SABRE, Quixada Christo, REAVER and the Specialist as online characters, and Art Gallery 2.

✷ *Beat Captain rank*
Unlocks MGL.

✷ *Beat Admiral rank*
Unlocks everything.

NURSE CVG'S TIP OF THE MONTH

007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

PS2, GC

Ah, James Bond. I'd like to shake and stir his vodka martini, polish his Walther PPK, then buff his Aston Martin thoroughly, before handling his gadget and showing him the best way to work undercover. Anyway, you'll have to earn Platinum awards to unlock these cheats, then pause the game and tap them in.

PS2:

Cloak ..... ● △ ✕ △ ■
Double Ammo ..... ● ● ✕ ● △
Double Damage ..... ● △ △ ■ ●
Easier movement in vehicle ..... ● ✕ ✕ ■ △
Full Ammo ..... ● ● △ ■ ■
Full Battery ..... ● △ △ ✕ ●
Golden Gun ..... ● △ ✕ ● △
Improved Battery ..... ● ■ ■ ✕ ●
Platinum Gun ..... ● ■ ■ ● ✕
Slow Motion Driving ..... ● ■ △ ✕ △
Unlimited Ammo ..... ✕ ■ ✕ ● ●
Unlimited Battery ..... ● ■ ● ■ △

GC:

Cloak ..... X,Y,A,Y,B
Double Ammo ..... X, X, A, X, Y
Double Damage ..... X,Y,Y,B,X
Full Ammo ..... X,X,Y,B,B
Full Battery ..... X,Y,Y,A,X
Golden Gun ..... X, Y, A, X, Y
Improved Battery ..... X, B, B, A, X
Improved Traction ..... X, A, A, B, Y
Unlimited Battery ..... X,B,X,B,Y

MAX PAYNE

GBA

I always thought all that stuff about good things in small packages was rubbish, but they've squeezed a lot of Payne into the GBA. Complete the game once to unlock this lovely lot:

- *DOA mode*
  Get as far through the game as you can with one life.
- *New York Minute mode*
  Shoot bad guys before time runs out.
- All weapons
- Infinite ammo
- Super cop

POKÉMON CHANNEL

GC

Not bloody Pokémon again. Well, if you must, here's how to unlock all the channels. Pokémon XXX, now that's a channel I'd watch. Pikachu getting boffed by Squirtle...

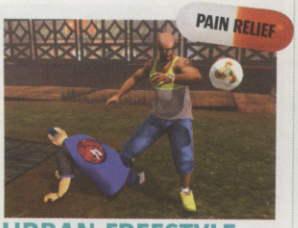
- *Full English Pichu Bros movie*
  After the sixth day, find in crates
- *Full Japenese Pichu Bros movie*
  After the sixth day, find in crates
- *Hosted by Kasumi Disc*
  Togepi will give this disc to you on the sixth day
- *Movie Projector*
  On the sixth day, Prof. Oak will give it to you
- *Pichu Bros fifth part*
  Find it in the Ruins of Truth
- *Pichu Bros fourth part*
  Play Pokemon Channel on the fourth day
- *Pichu Bros second part*
  Play Pokemon Channel on the second day
- *Pichu Bros third part*
  Play Pokemon Channel on the third day
- *Prime Binder*
  Collect 50 different kinds of Nice Cards
- *Superior Binder*
  Collect 25 different kinds of Nice Cards
- *All 3 varieties of the 9 Pikachu Nice Cards*
  Collect 101 different kinds of Nice Cards

LMA MANAGER 2004

PS2, XB

Football management? Can't the footballs look after themselves? Put these passwords in as your name and then enable the cheat from the Bonus menu:

- *LMA2004A*
  Makes your players faster than Thierry Henry riding a cheetah.
- *LMA2004B*
  Makes your players eternally young, like Michael Jackson without the kiddie bed-sharing.



URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER

PS2, XB, GC

Apparently this is all about showing off with your balls. Horrible things, balls. Look like fat, wrinkly men with alopecia. Chuck in these passwords for 'much ting':

- *5Y104D9A*
  Unlock Streetballers
- *A11T3AM5*
  Unlocks all teams
- *E06J3CT5*
  New Object in Inventory
- *GM2OPEN8*
  Unlocks all game modes
- *MAXSKILL*
  Maxes out your skills
- *SPEEDY01*
  Mad turbo
- *WIMP_A.1*
  Pussy opponents
- *Z26BEXW8*
  Tiny football

THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT

GC

Somebody mucked up this GameCube code in Issue 270. Nothing to do with me, of course, I didn't come along until Issue 271. Just so you know. To unlock the Cheats Gnome quickly enter Down, L, Z, R, Left, Right. Then these cheats will work:

- *Unlock all locations*
  Down on the D-pad, Z, R, L, Z
- *Unlock all objects*
  Down on the D-pad, Z, Left, Right, R
- *Unlock all skins*
  Left trigger, Y, A, Right trigger, Left
- *Unlock all Socials*
  L, R, Down on the D-pad, Down on the D-pad, Y

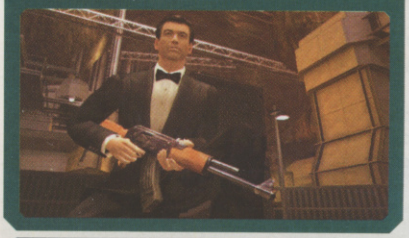
TOP 20 TIPS

TIPS FOR ALL THE BEST-SELLING GAMES

1 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

PS2, XBOX, GC, GBA

To tool yourself up with every weapon, earn 17 platinum medals then pause the game and enter:
PS2: ●, △, ✕, ✕, ●. **GC:** X, Y, A, A, X.



2 FINAL FANTASY X-2

PS2

To get the Pride of the Sword Garment Grid, go to Macalania during Chapter Three and finish "Protect the Agency" sub-quest.

3 SONIC HEROES

PS2, XBOX, GC

To play as shiny metallic characters, hold the following buttons after you select a level in two-player mode.
PS2: △ and ✕. **GC:** A and Y. **XBOX:** A and Y.

4 NORTON INTERNET SECURITY 2004

PC

Here's a tip – stop buying this and save your money for games. If you've got a virus, come see me.

5 NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND

XBOX, GC, PS2, GBA, PC

All the Sprint tracks by entering these codes at the main menu:
PS2: ↑, R2, R2, R2, R1, ↓, ↓, ↓. **XBOX:** A, Black, Black, Black, R, B, B, B. **GC:** Up, X, X, X, R, B, B, B.

6 THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC

To make your car invulnerable, go to the options menu, hold the L1 and R1 triggers, and enter the following codes:
PS2: △, ✕, △, ✕. **XBOX:** Y, A, Y, A. **GC:** Y, A, Y, A. **PC:** Hold F1 and press Right Arrow, Up Arrow, Right Arrow, Up Arrow.

7 PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

PS2, XBOX, GC, GBA, PC

For some retro Prince of Persia action, start a new game and enter these codes as soon as you gain control:
PS2: Hold L3 then tap ✕, ■, △, ●, △, ✕, ■, ●.
XBOX: Hold the left analogue stick, tap A, X, Y, B, Y, A, X, B.
GC: Plug a controller into slot one, another into slot 4, hold B on controller 4 and enter A, B, Y, X, Y, A, B, X on controller one.
PC: Hold X and tap Space, Left Mouse Button, E, C, E, Space, Left Mouse Button, C.

8 LORD OF THE RINGS: ROTK

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC

Pause the game and enter these codes to give you 1000 experience points while playing as Aragorn.
PS2: Hold R1 + R2 + L1 + L2, press ↑, ■, △, ✕.
XBOX: Hold L + R, and press A, X, Y, A.
GC: Hold L + R, and press A, X, Y, A.

9 FIFA 2004

PS2, XBOX, GC, GBA, PC

Get 40 points on your EA Bio to unlock Bundesliga and English Premier League third kits.

10 MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

PS2, XBOX, GC

To unlock the bullet shield, enter this at the password screen.
PS2: TANG. **XBOX:** WRASSE. **GC:** GOURAMI.

11 FINDING NEMO

PS2, XBOX, GC, GBA, PC

Enter these on the New Game screen to unlock a bonus level:
PS2: △, ■, ●, ●, ■, △, △, ■, ●, ●, ■, △, △, ●, ■, △, ■, ●, ●, ■, △.
XBOX: Y, X, B, B, X, Y, Y, X, B, B, X, Y, Y, B, X, Y, X, B, B, Y.
GC: Y, X, B, B, X, Y, Y, X, B, B, X, Y, Y, B, X, Y, X, B, B, X, Y.

12 GRAND THEFT AUTO: DOUBLE PACK

XBOX

Enter this code whenever you feel like it to get loads of cash.
Black, Black, L, L, C, B, D, A, C, B, D, A.

13 MAFIA

PS2, XBOX

To unlock the Bigfoot truck in Free Ride mode, get first place in every Championship race.

14 THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT

PS2, XBOX, GC

Enter these codes at any time while playing.
UNLOCK CHEATS MENU: **PS2:** R2, L1, R1, L2, ←, ●.
XBOX: L, Black, D, X, C. **GC:** B, L, Z, R, C, D.
UNLOCK ALL OBJECTS: **PS2:** L2, R2, ↑, △, L2. **XBOX:** Black, A, Y, B, R. **GC:** B, Z, C, D, R.

15 EYETOY: PLAY

PS2

To create even funkier colours in the rainbow playroom, hold ● on a pad and then move around.

16 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC

Type in "sherwood target" at the password screen to unlock the target world challenge in game modes.

17 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: SEASON 03/04

PC

To edit loads of aspects of your saved games go to www.sportsinteractive.co.uk and download MCM 03/04 Editor.

18 LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

PS2, GC

At the password screen, enter DANGERD to unlock the Danger Duck costume. Dangerous indeed.

19 BAD BOYS II

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC

At the Press Start screen, enter the following: **PS2:** ●, ↑, ■, △, →, ↓. **XBOX:** B, Up, X, Y, Right, Down.

20 BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II

PS2, XB

Enter this code at any time to level up.
PS2: Hold L1, R1, △, ■, ●, ✕, then press L2
XBOX: Hold L + R + Y + A + B + X, then press White.

SHOW US YOUR TIPS!

GET YOUR TIPS OUT FOR THE NURSE!

You lot are keeping me really busy with all your tips. I'm thinking about taking on a volunteer to give me a hand whenever I'm getting hot and bothered. Any volunteers?

There's a bit of an RPG theme to Show Us Your Tips this month, with instant cures for .hack, Champions of Norrath and Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles. Now, I like a bit of goblin and sweaty codpieces as much as the next girl, but let's try and keep things a bit more varied in future, okay? You know I want it. Keep sending in your tips boys, or I might have to start pulling you all in for rectal examinations...

.HACK: INFECTION PART 1

PS2

I've noticed that you can track down secret characters by watching the message boards for posts. For instance, Natsume and Sanjuro ask for information on the whereabouts of special weapons in threads entitled 'Weapon Information'. Go to these locations, help Natsume or Sanjuro out, and you'll either be able to keep the weapon or have the characters join your party!

Andrew, Birmingham

CVG Not a bad tip, but you really shouldn't be picking up people from message boards. Tried it once and he was a right weirdo – called Ed Zed or something like that...

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REALMS OF EVERQUEST

PS2

It's a bit complicated to do, but you can duplicate any item in the game. Create a new save of your character then save on your normal save slot. Load up the new save, drop the item you want to duplicate on the floor and then import the other save. Pick the item off the floor, save, and there you have it, two identical items! You can do this as many times as you want!

Barry, Exeter

CVG A BIT complicated? Mind you, it is good to get your hands on a nice pair. Of items. Two items. Stop it!

FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

GC

I've worked out the Magicite combinations for all the best spells in the game:

- *Gravity Spell*
  Fire + Ice OR Fire + Thunder, or Blizzard + Thunder
- *Holy Spell*
  Fire/Blizzard/Thunder + Life
- *Slow Spell*
  Life + Fire/Blizzard/Thunder
- *Fira Spell*
  Fire + Fire
- *Blizzara Spell*
  Blizzard + Blizzard
- *Thunder Spell*
  Thunder + Thunder

These next three can't be done unless your Moogle's put the chalice down or in multiplayer:

- *Firaga Spell*
  Fire + Fire + Fire
- *Blizzaga Spell*
  Blizzard + Blizzard + Blizzard
- *Thundaga Spell*
  Thunder + Thunder + Thunder

Gordon, Paisley

CVG You've been spending a lot of time playing with your Moogle. Here's a combination for you: Too much Final Fantasy + being a loser = no girlfriend.

MAFIA

PS2, XB

If the cops are on your tail and you need to lose the heat quick, get inside a trolley, a rail station, or an elevated rail station and hang around. You'll be completely safe from the police and your wanted level will eventually subside.

Andre, Peterborough

CVG Sounds like a bit of a wimpy way to get out of trouble, Andre. Be a man!

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2004

PC

I've been hammering UT2K4 since I got the demo and I've come across these mint codes. When playing a botmatch, press ~ and enter them in!

- *Allammo*
  999 Ammo For Every Weapon
- *Loaded*
  All weapons
- *God*
  Infinite Health
- *Ghost*
  Turns off clipping and gravity for the player
- *Fly*
  You character can fly through the air as though you are in 'fly-by' mode.

Mercury, via e-mail

CVG That's some good tippage. Sponge bath with extra soap for you, Mercury...

KYA: DARK LINEAGE

PS2

There's a secret ending to discover if you save every single Nativ, and this code will help you get it:

L1, R2, L2, R1, ▲, ▲, ◀, ●, ▶, ●, START to restore life.

Peter, via e-mail

CVG I've heard, like me, Kya goes in for a bit of watersports.

LIFE SAVER

NFL STREET

PS2, XB, GC

Hey CVG! Wanted to chuck you a tip that makes scoring touchdowns really easy. First you need to get unlimited turbo – on PS2 pause the game, hold L1, then press ●✕▶◀◀▲. That'll make getting away from tackles easier. Then spend all your development points on your running back. As long as he's built like a brick shithouse and you go to him every play, no-one can stop you!

Nolan, Carlisle

CVG Muscle-bound men in tights who love beating each other till their muscles go stiff? Takes all sorts, I suppose.

FLATLINER

TOP SPIN

XB

You can take the piss out of your opponent with verbal taunts as well as physical gestures. Press the Left Thumbstick Up, Down, Left, or Right and press Black or White to stick it right up 'em.

Always_ace, via e-mail

CVG What, I'm supposed to get all excited about a little bit of dirty talk? Call the pathologist, this one's a goner...

CVG FIRST AID KIT

Nurse CVG gets your gaming rocks off

Right boys, let's get this straight. I can't help you with your 'personal' problems. And to be quite honest, Andrew Hilton aged 16 from Manchester, you shouldn't have been doing that in the first place.

What I can help you with are your gaming aches and pains. Need to make some noise on the Underground? Check out my tips for Need For Speed. Buggering up you simulated life as well as your real life? Have a gander at my Sims Bustin' Out hints. And if you're keen to kick ass on Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow's brilliant multiplayer, I've asked Mike to offer his insider info. Didn't take much persuading, the naughty boy.

But I can't help if you don't ask. Don't be afraid to write me or text in, I won't bite. Well, not unless I need to apply pressure to your throbbing wound, anyway.

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC

Me and my mates love playing NFS: Underground and we spend ages souping up our cars and then taking them round to each other's house to race. Thing is, my motor's tricked to the max and I want to blow them away with something unique. Any ideas?

Kev, Romford

***CVG** Tricked to the max? I didn't know there was magic in Need for Speed: Underground. And who the hell's Max?*

Anyway, I dragged Graeme away from his car magazines (they're full of half-naked girls – absolute filth) and he reckons fitting supersize rims is a good way to look unique. Get a Skyline, put 20" rims on it, then trade it in for a small car like a Miata.

Normally these little motors can only handle 17" rims, but your trade-in will keep the huge 20" rims from the Skyline! Sweet eh? Oh, and if that slo-mo camera angle when you hit a jump really annoys you, just pause the game. When you resume you'll be back in the normal view, making it easier to line up your landing. Sorted!

SIMS BUSTIN; OUT

PS2, XBOX, GC

I've been playing The Sims Bustin' Out for ages now and I'm getting really annoyed at my slow progress. Any tips on how I can get mates, earn money and be successful quicker?

Vincent, Minehead

***CVG** Wearing my nurse's outfit has always seemed to work well for me – seems to get me lots of friends. Had a little chat with Lee and he gave me a few pointers... three at once, actually.*

✷ *Nick a roommate's skills:*
Establish a GBA connection on the Cube version. Send your Sim to Sim Valley, but as they're on their way select one of your roommates with high skills. When your Sim leaves, your roommate will be transported onto the GBA. Then bring back your Sim and he'll have your roommate's skills!

✷ *Get 100% personality:*
Evict the Frutti family then edit Ginger. You'll be able to bump all her personality points to the maximum!

✷ *Move away, earn money:*
Buy something expensive then move out of the house. You'll get cash back for the object. Then move back in! All the benefits of the object at none of the cost!

THIS MONTH'S KISS OF LIFE

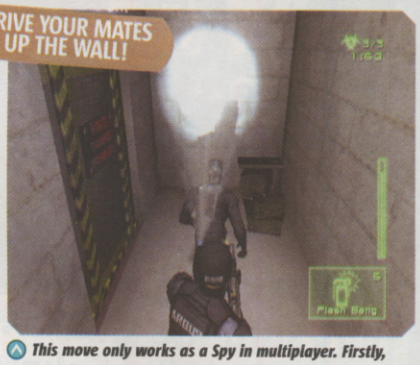
SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMMORROW

XBOX, PC

Just got Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow and I can't get enough of it. I've finished one-player already and can't wait to kick ass online. Do you have any killer tips for either the Mercs or Spies so I don't make a tool of myself when playing against my friends.

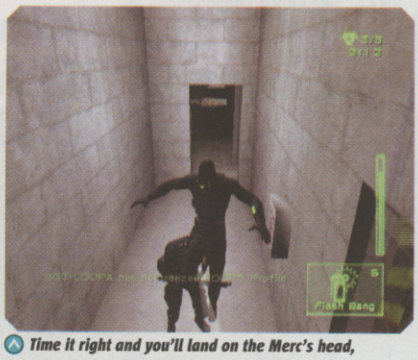
KuMAna, e-mail

***CVG** For weeks now Mike and Paul have been sneaking up on each other, grabbing themselves roughly from behind and whispering in each other's ears. Oh, and they've been playing Splinter Cell, too.*



This move only works as a Spy in multiplayer. Firstly, when a Merc is hot on your tail, run towards a wall...

...push forward and double tap Y to pull off a Matrix style gravity-defying, Spidey-style somersault off the wall



Time it right and you'll land on the Merc's head, knocking him out. Handy for a quick escape too!

CONFLICT DESERT STORM II

GC

I need help with Conflict Desert Storm II on the GameCube. It's bad enough that I'm getting kicked in by Saddam's hairy-faced goons, but my nob-head mates completed it ages ago on PS2 and Xbox!

Sibot, e-mail

***CVG** Nothing wrong with a bit of 'tache. Nice and tickly, you know? Alex is the resident super trooper and he sorted me out. With these codes, I mean:*
At the main menu tap in Z, Z, Y, Y, X, X, B, B, Start, Start. Now go to the game options menu, go to Cheats, and you can muck about with the following options:

✷ *Mission List:*
Choose any mission

✷ *Trooper Level:*
Lets you increase your team's stats

✷ *Next Mission:*
Skips to next mission

✷ *Infinite Save:*
Save as much as you want

✷ *Enemy Level:*
Make enemies thick as your gran's mince

✷ *Infinite Ammo:*
Take a guess

THE SURGERY IS OPEN!

She's not just here to look good, you know. She does though, doesn't she? Anyway, CVG's nursie wants to hear from YOU, so don't let her down. Drop her a line and she'll handle your tip with care.

TEXT 4 TIPS

TEXT YOUR TIP TO: 83125

(SAME FOR T-MOBILE USERS)

How to enter: first type 'CVG TIPS' and then enter your hint, tip or strategy. Make sure you tell us the name of the game and what format the tip is for!

TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

CVGTIPS@DENNIS.CO.UK

TEXT TO WIN

TEXT YOUR ANSWERS TO: **83125**

(SAME FOR T-MOBILE USERS)

How to enter: first type 'CVG SPLINTER' and then the letter matching your answer. Eg: 'CVG SPLINTER B'

TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

SCOOP

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW PRIZES TODAY!

CVG COMPETITIONS – OFFICIALLY GOOD FOR YOUR STEALTH!

Duck into the shadows and nick off with quality Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow and Rainbow Six 3 prizes!

We could try to think up a clever introduction to this competition but what's the point? Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow is AMAZING – we gave it 94% last issue. So go on, enter the competition and you might win.

Alright, so you need some compo foreplay to get you in the mood. We love Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow. We love sneaking, we love peeking, and we love grabbing bad guys from behind and giving them a good leathering.

But Pandora Tomorrow's not just about playing with yourself: it's got great multiplayer, and you need to play it to experience the tense, atmospheric and arsehole-clenching online experience over Xbox Live. Have we whetted your appetites enough yet?

Good, 'cos we've been in communication with special agents at Ubisoft to arrange the ultimate Pandora Tomorrow prize. If you're one of two exceptionally jammy winners you'll snatch an Xbox, a copy of Pandora Tomorrow, a copy of Rainbow Six 3 bundled with a fancypants headset, and an Xbox Live Starter Kit to get your online espionage career underway.

See? Who needs clever introductions when they've got prizes this good! Answer the question, send or text it in, then hide in a shadow and hope you get lucky. ✷

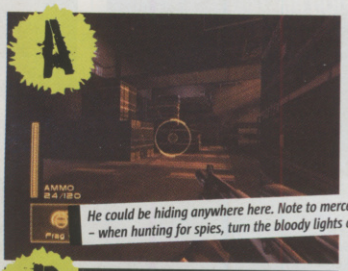
WIN ALL THIS!

Two lucky spies will each extract an Xbox, Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow, Rainbow Six 3 with headset and an Xbox Live Starter Kit. Stealthy! Five runners-up will each receive Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow and Rainbow Six 3 with headset! Just remember that Xbox Live needs broadband access from a suitable service provider, which isn't included in the prize.

TO WIN: EXERCISE YOUR YOUR COUNTER-ESPIONAGE SKILLS AND SPOT THE SPY!

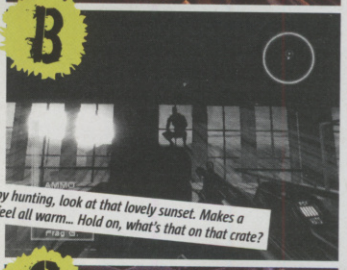
In multiplayer Pandora Tomorrow you play as either a Third Echelon spy or a counter-spy employed by Argus. Not Argos – that'd be daft. Anyway, the point is that you're a counter-spy and you've got to tell us: which of these screenshots harbours a sneaky spy lurking in the shadows?

A



He could be hiding anywhere here. Note to mercenaries – when hunting for spies, turn the bloody lights on!

B



Sod spy hunting, look at that lovely sunset. Makes a merc feel all warm... Hold on, what's that on that crate?

C

Or is the sneaky wee bugger taking in a flick? And no, that dude on the screen doesn't count

YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT

Tick one of the following boxes

A.☐ B.☐ C.☐

★TITLE: .....

★FORENAME: .....

★SURNAME: .....

★ADDRESS: .....

.....

★POSTCODE: .....

★DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: .....

★EMAIL: .....

Send you entries to: Computer And Video Games, CCVG405B, Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford, BD1 5RZ

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Please indicate clearly on your entry if you are a current subscriber to the magazine. Your details will be processed by Dennis Publishing Ltd (publishers of CVG magazine) and our suppliers in full accordance with UK data protection legislation.

Dennis Publishing Ltd may contact you with information about our other products and services. Please tick if you prefer NOT to receive such information by post [ ] email [ ]phone [ ] mobile phone messaging [ ]. Dennis Publishing Ltd occasionally shares data, on a secure basis, with other reputable companies who wish to contact you with information about their products and services. Please tick if you prefer NOT to receive such information by post [ ] phone [ ]. Please tick if you DO wish to receive such information by email [ ] mobile phone messaging [ ]. Closing date: May 5 2004

TEXTING TERMS AND CONDITIONS: In order to interact with CVG text services the user should send the keyword and response to 83125. Misspelled voting keywords will not be counted. All entries must be received by May 5 2004. Dennis publishing will not be liable for any delays in the receipt of any SMS messages as delivery is subject to effective transmission from your network operator. Messages sent to CVG will be charged at your standard operator rate

The message to confirm the interaction has been received and counted will be charged at 25p

Upon closure of campaigns Dennis Publishing will have no further obligation thereafter to forward any unread or unsent messages to user or any other party. By replying Yes, the user agrees to receive further text messages from CVG and other Dennis Publications regarding future services and promotions, as well as market research run or conducted by Dennis Publishing and other related or associated businesses. The user can unsubscribe at any time by replying 'STOP' to any message received.

UK's GREATEST IMPORTER

STOCKED WITH THE LATEST U.S. GAMES, CONSOLES & ACCESSORIES

★ SPECIAL OFFERS AVAILABLE ★

ANIMAL CROSSING PLUS MEMORY CARD 59 Now Only £39.99

FREELOADER NOW AVAILABLE AT £11.99-BARGAIN!!! REGISTER NOW ONLINE FOR OUR LOYALTY SCHEME

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

www.kingcube.co.uk

HOTLINE: 0845 225 40 99

To Advertise here call Joanne Allum on 0207 907 6685

THINK YOUR THE BEST? PROVE IT AND WIN CASH

WWW. CIRCUITBRAKERS .CO.UK

THE ORIGINAL, UNOFFICIAL XBOX RACING GAME COMPETITION WEBSITE

BUY - SELL - TRADE

CONSOLE & PC GAMES

RETRO & MODERN

BRING OR SEND BY POST WITH SAE FOR CASH

GAMES EXCHANGE

40 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 ✆ 020 7460 6716

Open 7 days 10am - 8pm

Bring official ID with address & signature when selling or exchanging

HUGE SELECTION ON SALE

www.evo.co.uk

evo

THE THRILL OF DRIVING

News, driven, road tests, fast fleet, forum, games
and much more – every day – online.

All together on one new site

NEXT MONTH

HALF-LIFE 2

WORLD XBOX EXCLUSIVE!

Contents subject to change without prior notice

PLUS! 2 MUST HAVE GIFTS!

IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT VIDEOGAME EVER AND WE'VE GOT THE WORLD EXCLUSIVE FIRST INFO ON XBOX!

PLUS! WE'VE BEEN TO VALVE AND PLAYED THE WHITE-HOT PC VERSION!

PLUS!

RED DEAD REVOLVER

It's high noon – CVG quick-draws the verdict on the meanest sonofabitch game in the Wild West. Yee-haw!

FIREFIGHTER FD18

The UK version of Konami's flame-grilled fireman sim gets a roasting in our red-hot review, but is it better than the US version?

CY GIRLS

Ultra-fit female secret agents in skintight combat costumes? Go on then. We give them a good seeing to and tell you everything

JUICED

This boy racer could burn NFS Underground on the streets – we thrash it good and proper and show you what's under its hood

THE SUFFERING

Chuck knife-wielding monsters into a maximum security prison and what do you get? Nightmarish chaos! Definitive verdict here

HITMAN: CONTRACTS

The ultimate assassin 'em up terminated with extreme prejudice in our cold-blooded review. Have you got the stomach for it?

PLUS!

ALL THESE SCORCHERS! ✷ Karaoke Stage ✷ SingStar ✷ Way Of The Samurai 2 ✷ Galleon ✷ TOCA Race Driver 2 ✷ UEFA Euro 2004 ✷ CSI 2: Dark Motives ✷ Van Helsing ✷ A Bard's Tale ✷ Altered Beast ✷ Richard Burns Rally ✷ Shadow Ops: Red Mercury ✷ Deadly Skies III ✷ Xbox Manhunt ✷ Riding Spirits 2 ✷ **AND SO MUCH MORE IT HURTS!**

BRINGING YOU THE HOTTEST GAMING INFO EVERY MONTH. ON SALE MAY 6

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

15 YEARS AGO

COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY!

CVG is the world's first and best games magazine. But while the mag has forever been a class act, games haven't always been as good as they are today...

1989

ISSUE 96

Being a G-Dog 15 years ago sucked. Crap graphics and only half a dozen dead-easy levels – and no car-jacking or hos. Thank God for GTA!

What was life like before GTA? You really don't want to know. We really have been spoiled by Vice City, because 15 years ago, things were a lot more... well, rubbish.

Now, with a handful of weapons and plenty of badass attitude, you can pretty much make it from lowly hoodlum to mob boss. But back in 1989, the closest you got to the gangsters was when you were slapping the cuffs on them, in movie tie-in The Untouchables.

Based on the kick-ass movie starring Kevin Costner and Sean Connery, you were super-cop Elliot Ness, out to frame mob king Al Capone. Sounds good so far, but wait – rather than GTA's sprawling city, all you got here was six levels of side-scrolling tedium. The Spectrum version's graphics were black and white (BLACK AND WHITE, for God's sake!) and the best bit was sharpshooting the bad guys. And that was it. Count yourself lucky San Andreas is out in October.

"HIT THE BUTTON TO PUNCH AND KICK – HARDLY VIRTUA FIGHTER 4"

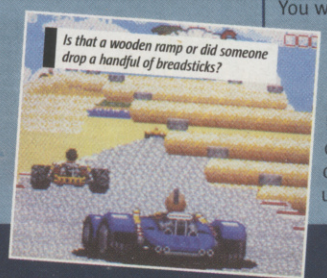
sharp graphics, this was ground-breaking stuff. It had fighting too! Well, kinda. Hit the button to punch and kick – hardly Virtua Fighter 4. But y'know, it was good, back then. And it paved the way for some of today's big movie licences like James Bond. Respect.

GWAN BAT BOY

Big movie tie-ins were as big back then as they are now, and Batman notched up some sweet scores when it was reviewed on Amiga and Atari ST (ask your dad). With 3D driving levels and

CATCH MY DRIFT

Batman wasn't the only big deal on the Amiga, either. Back then Sega wasn't that well known for gaming at home, but it did make kick-ass arcade machines. Coin-guzzler Power Drift was a smash at the arcades and finally screeched onto Commodore's big A and the cover of CVG. But while it had the speed of the arcade original, the graphics were shite! It had ramps that looked like breadsticks and cars that jerked around the course, rather than cruising! Sure, the rollercoaster-style drops were cool, but we'd rather play GT4 any day.



WIN, LOSE OR DRAW

You want more examples of why you're better off today? Check this. Slick TV adverts were unheard of – instead we got badly drawn pics of dodgy-looking Page 3 girls. We could've drawn 'em better ourselves, ferchrissakes! Just give us some crayons!

BEST GAME #96

■ **Tetris 95%**
This addictive puzzler was perfect on Game Boy – now it's free on your mobile!

WORST GAME #96

■ **Turbo Esprit 22%**
Miami Vice set in Milton Keynes. Not very exciting as this racer proved.

COUNT YOURSELF UNLUCKY

■ Compilations were all the rage. Six old games for the price of one – why don't we get these anymore? Oh, they were all rubbish.

CALL ME 24/7, I'VE GOT WHAT YOU NEED!

Providing Every Cheat You'll Ever Need

CHEATS UNLIMITED

A SIMPLE CALL AND YOU'VE GOT THE CHEAT

CHEATS TIPS & WALKTHROUGHS

TOP WALKTHROUGHS PLUS OVER 20,000 CHEATS & TIPS

GAMEBOY ADVANCE

A Link to the Past
Advance Wars
Advance Wars 2
Aggressive Inline
Beyblade: Ult. Blader Jam
Broken Sword
Bruce Lee: Return of Legend
Dragonball Z: L. of Goku 2
Finding Nemo
Golden Sun
Harry Potter & Ch.of Secrets
Harry Potter & Phil.'s Stone
Harvest Moon: F.of M.Town
Lord of the Rings: F. of Ring
Lord of the Rings: R.of King
Max Payne
Metroid Fusion
Metroid: Zero Mission
Pokemon Pinball: Ruby & S.
Pokemon Ruby
Pokemon Sapphire
Rayman 3
Simpsons: Road Rage
Sonic Advance
Sonic Advance 2
Sonic Battle
Spyro: Season of Flame
Street Fighter Alpha 3
Super Mario Advance 2
Tony Hawk's Underground
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Duel Monst.Ex.3
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Sacred Cards
Yu-Gi-Oh!: World C.T.2004
Yu-Gi-Oh!: World Wide Ed.
Zelda: A Link to the Past
Zelda: Oracle of Seasons

Plus Many More...

PC

Age of Empires: R. of Rome
Airport Inc
Armed and Dangerous
Baldur's Gate 2: Sh. of Amn
Battlefield 1942
Broken Sword 2
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon
Call of Duty
Champ. Manager '03/'04
Civilization 3
Com. & Conq.: Generals
Discworld Noir
Divine Divinity
Doom III*
Dredd vs Death
Everquest II*
FIFA 2002
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Half Life 2*
Harry Potter & Ch.of Secrets
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hooters: Road Trip
Italian Job
Medal of Honor: Pacific As.*
Midnight Club 2
Rollercoaster T.:Corkscrew F.
Rollercoaster Tycoon
Rollercoaster Tycoon 2
Sim City 3000
Sim City 4
Sims
Sims: Deluxe
Star Trek: Generations
Tomb Raider: Angel of Dark.
Total Club Manager 2004
X Wing
X2: The Threat

Plus Many More...

GAMECUBE

Agent Under Fire
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance
Big Air Freestyle
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Burnout
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Dark Alliance, Baldur's Gate
Die Hard: Vendetta
Double Dash, Mario Kart
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai
Eighteen Wheeler
Enter the Matrix
Eternal Darkness
Everything or Nothing: 007
FIFA 2004
Final Fantasy C. Chronicles
Gladius
Godzilla: Destroy all Monst.
Gotcha Force
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
James Bond 007: Nightfire
James Bond: E. or Nothing
Kirby's Air Ride
Leg. of Zelda: Ocarina of T.
Leg. of Zelda: Wind Waker
Lord of the Rings: R.of King
Lord of the Rings: T. Towers
Luigi's Mansion
Mario Kart: Double Dash
Mario Sunshine
Matrix, Enter the
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Metroid Prime
Mortal Kombat: Deadly All.
Need for Speed Undergr'nd
Nightfire
007 Nightfire
Phantasy Star Online
Prince of Persia: S. of Time
Rebel Strike, R. Squadron 3
Red Faction 2
Res. Evil: Code Veronica X
Resident Evil
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Resident Evil Zero
Return of the King
Rocky
Scooby Doo: Night of 100 F.
Simpsons: Hit & Run
Sims: Bustin' Out
Skies of Arcadia Legends
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle
Sonic Adventure DX
Sonic Heroes
Sonic Mega Collection
Soul Calibur 2
Sphinx & Cursed Mummy
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
Star Wars: Rebel Strike
Star Wars: Rogue Leader
Starfox Adventures
Super Mario Sunshine
Super Smash Bros Melee
Tak and the Power of Juju*
The Sims: Bustin Out
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
True Crime: Streets of LA
Viewtiful Joe
Wind Waker
WWE Wrestlemania X8
XIII (Thirteen)
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.
X-Men: Next Dimension
Zelda: Majora's Mask
Zelda: Master Quest
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Zelda: The Wind Waker

Plus Many More...

X-BOX

Alias*
Aliens vs Predator:Extinction
Bad Boys 2
Baldur's Gate: D. Alliance 2
Big Mutha Truckers
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Championship Manager '02
Conflict: Desert Storm
Dark Angel, J. Cameron's
Desert Storm
Deus Ex: Invisible War
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dynasty Warriors 3
Everything or Nothing: 007
Evil Dead: Fist. of Boomstick
Freestyle Metal X
Gladius
Gotham Racing 2
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Great Escape
Halo
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hobbit
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb
Invisible War, Deus Ex
Italian Job: L.A. Heist
James Bond: E. or Nothing
Judge Dredd:Dredd v Death
Jurassic Park: Op. Genesis
LMA Manager 2004
Lord of the Rings: F. of Ring
Lord of the Rings: R.of King
Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter
Max Payne
Max Payne 2
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Metal Arms:Glitch in System
Mission Impossible:O.Surma
Moto GP2: U.R.T.
Munch's Oddysee
Need for Speed Undergr'nd
Oddworld Munch's Oddysee
Pirates of the Caribbean
Prince of Persia: S. of Time
Project Gotham Racing 2
Rainbow Six 3
Return to Castle Wolfenstein
Robotech: Battlecry
Rollercoaster Tycoon
Secret W. Over Normandy
Sega GT 2002
Silent Hill 2: Inner Fears
Sims: Bustin' Out
Soul Calibur 2
Spawn: Armageddon
Splinter Cell
Star Wars: Jedi Academy
Star Wars: Knights Old Rep.
Starsky & Hutch
Tenchu: Ret. from Darkness
Terminator 3 R.of Machines
The Return of the King
The Thing
Tiger Woods Golf 2003
Time Splitters 2
TOCA Race Driver
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3
Top Spin
Total Club Manager 2004
True Crime: Streets of LA
Turok, Evolution
Vexx
X-Files: Resist or Serve*
XIII (Thirteen)
X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.

Plus Many More...

PLAYSTATION 2

A = 0 1
Ace Combat 4: Shat. Skies
Ace Combat: Distant Thund.
Age of Empires 2
Alias*
Aliens vs Predator:Extinction
Alone in the Dark 4
Angel of Darkness
Atlantis 3: New World
B = 0 2
Backyard Wrestling
Bad Boys 2
Baldur's Gate: D. Alliance 2
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu
BloodRayne
Broken Sword: S. Dragon
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
C = 0 3
Clock Tower 3
Club Football
Colin McRae Rally 4
Conflict: Desert Storm
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Crash B'coot: Wr. of Cortex
Cricket 2002
D = 0 4
Dark Cloud 2
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2
Deus-Ex
Devil May Cry 2
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2
Dynasty Warriors 3
Dynasty Warriors 4
E = 0 5
Enter the Matrix
Everything or Nothing: 007
Evil Dead: Fist. of Boomstick
F = 0 6
FIFA 2003
FIFA 2004
Final Fantasy X
Final Fantasy X-2
Futurama
G = 0 7
Getaway
Ghost Hunter
Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm
Gran Turismo 3
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: V. City
Great Escape
H = 0 8
Harry Potter & Ch.of Secrets
Haven: Call of the King
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
I = 0 9
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb
J = 1 0
Jak & Daxter
Jak 2: Renegade
James Bond 007: Nightfire
James Bond: E. or Nothing
K = 1 1
Kill.switch
Kingdom Hearts
L = 1 2
Lara Croft: Ang.of Darkness
LMA Manager 2003
LMA Manager 2004
Looney Tunes:Back in Action
Lord of the Rings: R.of King
Lord of the Rings: T. Towers
M = 1 3
Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter
Mafia
Manhunt
Max Payne
Max Payne 2
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Men In Black 2 Alien Escape
Metal Gear Solid 2
Mission Impossible:O.Surma
Mortal Kombat: Deadly All.
MTX Mototrax
N = 1 4
Naval Ops:Warship Gunner
Need for Speed Undergr.
Nightfire
No One Lives Forever
O = 1 5
Onimusha: Warlords
007: Everything or Nothing
P = 1 6
Premier Manager 2002
Primal
Prince of Persia: S. Time
Pro Evolution Soccer 3
Project Zero
Project Zero 2
R = 1 8
Ratchet and Clank
Ratchet and Clank 2
Red Faction
Reign Of Fire
Res. Evil: Code Veronica X
Return to Castle Wolfenstein
R-Type Final
S = 1 9
Secret W. Over Normandy
Shadow of Memories
Silent Hill 3
Simpsons: Hit & Run
Sims: Bustin' Out
Smackdown! 5: H.C.T.Pain
SOCOM: US Navy Seals
Sonic Heroes
Soul Calibur 2
Sphinx & Cursed Mummy
Spiderman The Movie
Splinter Cell
Star Trek: Shattered Univ.
State of Emergency
Stuntman
Summoner 2
Syphon Filter: Omega St.*
T = 2 0
Tekken 4
Terminator 3 R.of Machines
Terminator: Dawn of Fate
The Getaway
The Hulk
The Sims
The Sims: Bustin Out
The Thing
Thirteen (XIII)
Tiger Woods Golf 2004
Time Splitters
Time Splitters 2
Tom Clancy's Jungle Storm
Tomb Raider: Angel of Dark.
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Tony Hawk's Underground
Total Club Manager 2004
True Crime: Streets of LA
V = 2 2
Vice City, Grand Theft Auto
W = 2 3
Worms 3D
WWE Smackdown! 5: HCTP
X = 2 4
XIII (Thirteen)
Y = 2 5
Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel.of Roses
0-9 = 2 7
007 Ev'thing or Nothing

Plus Many More...

GAMEBOY COLOR

Dragon Warrior Monsters 2
Legend of Zelda: Seasons
Mario Land
Mario Land 2
Pokemon Blue
Pokemon Crystal
Pokemon Gold
Pokemon Red
Pokemon Silver
Pokemon Trading Card
Pokemon Yellow
Silver Pokemon
Super Mario Bros DX
Zelda: Links Awakening DX
Zelda: Oracle of Ages
Zelda: Oracle of Seasons

Plus Many More...

NINTENDO64

Blues Brothers 2000
Goldeneye
No Mercy, WWF
Zelda: Majora's Mask
Zelda: Ocarina of Time

Plus Many More...

DREAMCAST

In Nippon Pro Wrestling 2
Metropolis Street Racer
Resident Evil: C. Veronica
Sonic Adventure
Tomb Raider 4: Last Revel.

Plus Many More...

PS-ONE

Alone in the Dark 4
Alundra 2
Army Men: Land Sea & Air
Atlantis
Beyblade
Breath of Fire 4
Com. & Conq.: Red Alert
Digimon World
Digimon World 2
Digimon World 3
Dino Crisis
Dracula Resurrection
Dracula The Last Sanctuary
Final Fantasy 7
Final Fantasy 8
Hidden & Dangerous
Hogs of War
In Cold Blood
Medal of Honor
Metal Gear Solid
Rayman
Rayman 2
Silent Hill
Soul Reaver
Spiderman 2
Spyro 3: Year of the Dragon
Star Trek: Invasion
Syphon Filter 3
The Italian Job
Theme Park World
Tomb Raider 2
Tomb Raider 3
Tomb Raider 5: Chronicles
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Worms Armageddon
Yu-Gi-Oh! Forbidden M.

Plus Many More...

PlayStation
PlayStation 2
PC CD-ROM
XBOX
GAMECUBE
Dreamcast
NINTENDO 64
GAME BOY ADVANCE
GAME BOY COLOR

cheats & walkthroughs for all these consoles

CALL NOW!

- OVER 20,000 CHEATS AVAILABLE
- THE LATEST CHEATS ADDED EVERY DAY
- COMPILED BY GAMING EXPERTS
- 100S OF QUALITY GUIDES

CALL THIS NUMBER FROM YOUR HOME PHONE OR ANY LANDLINE

09067 592 228

CALLS COST ONLY 75p PER MINUTE

NEW

MOBILE PHONE ACCESS NUMBER CALL NOW FROM ANY MOBILE PHONE

CALL THIS NUMBER FROM YOUR MOBILE PHONE

62000

CALLS COST ONLY 75p PER MINUTE

AVAILABLE ON ALL THESE NETWORKS

orange · T-Mobile · O2 · vodafone

Please ensure you have permission from the bill payer before calling. Callers must be aged 16 or over. All logos and game titles are trademarks of their respective companies. Details are correct at time of going to press.*Information for forthcoming releases is added as soon as it becomes available, this is usually before the release date. Please put any comments or questions in writing to Interactive Telcom Ltd, 8 Grants Walk, PL25 5AA, or email custserv@cheatsunlimited.com, or call our

24hr Customer Service: (Freephone) 0800 081 6000

VAN HELSING™

EVIL HAS ONE NAME TO FEAR

THE GAME

IN STORES MAY 2004

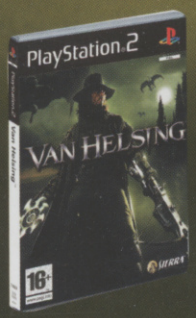
Spectacular kill moves · Deadly weaponry · Haunting Transylvania locations · Battle Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, The Wolf Man and more.

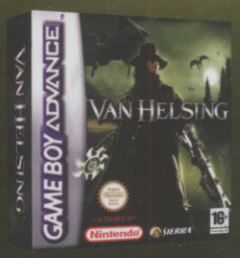
www.vanhelsinggame.com

SEE THE MOVIE

VAN HELSING

IN THEATRES MAY 2004





SIERRA™ UNIVERSAL SAFFIRE

PlayStation.2 XBOX GAME BOY ADVANCE

"Van Helsing" interactive game © 2004 Vivendi Universal Games, Inc. Van Helsing ™ & ® Universal Studios. Licensed by Universal Studios Licensing LLLP. All Rights Reserved.© 2004 Sierra Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. Sierra and the Sierra Logo are trademarks of Sierra Entertainment Inc. Tm and ® indicate trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. ™, ®, Game Boy Advance logo is a trademark of Nintendo © 2001 Nintendo. Microsoft, Xbox, and the Xbox logo are either registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. Vivendi Universal Games and the Vivendi Universal Games logo are trademarks of Vivendi Universal Games, Inc.